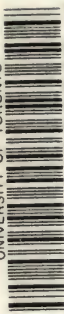


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Relig.

# ECCE TERRA;

OR,

## THE HAND OF GOD IN THE EARTH.

BY THE

REV. E. F. BURR, D. D.,

AUTHOR OF "ECCE CÆLUM," "PATER MUNDI," ETC

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Nibil rerum humanarum sine DEI MANU fieri putabat.

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## PREFACE.

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THE characters which a divine Hand once traced on the walls of Belshazzar's palace have all disappeared. The walls themselves are gone. If the broken materials could now be found, it would be quite impossible, by any art or chemistry, or other science known to us, to discover the faintest trace of those radiant words which so dazzled the court of Babylon.

Not so with the characters which a divine Hand has traced on the walls of the heavens and the earth. These walls are still standing, apparently as strong and fair as ever. Some of the inscriptions on them are as legible as when first made. Others, like the original writing of some palimpsest, have been thickly overwritten by clumsy later scribes till it is hard to make out the nobler underlying scripture. And others still were originally traced in lines that were never meant to be visible to men, save when warmed by the fires of an earnest piety or touched by the chemistry of a reverent science. But, in one state or another, all these heavenly scriptures are still extant, and may, with suitable pains, be read and interpreted.

I am no Daniel. Yet I have ventured, in *Ecce Cælum*, to attempt the reading and interpreting of some of the divine inscriptions on the sky. In the present volume I attempt a similar work for the earth.

But not after the former manner. This would require me to summarize all the sciences that deal with the earth. But assuming (what I have endeavored to show in other volumes) that there is a personal God, and that he has given the Christian Scriptures, I first seek to show that the earth is thickly covered with a divine handwriting by showing, in a general way, that the hand of God is active in every event, and consequently in every earthly *fact*, inasmuch as every fact is an event or includes many events. But to show this is far from being enough. For many reasons the general doctrine of a universal divine activity in the world, when accepted, is not as real and impressive to our thought as it is desirable to have it. The natural way of meeting this difficulty is by (1st) setting aside the chief apparent objections to the doctrine; (2d) bringing forward its chief points of harmony with the constitution and course of nature; (3d) instancing decisive examples of divine action, especially of the larger and more striking sort. Examples are the eye of philosophy.

Accordingly, this is the way I have chosen. In using it I have drawn freely from history, science and Scripture, as being parallel authorities. The reader who can freely accept them all has an evident advantage, so far as strength of impression is concerned; but whoever is not prepared to do this, let him take the fractional light that is left him and make the most of it. It is better than none. And it may lead him to more light, as even a lantern may lead to an illuminated palace.

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I.

THE PARALLEL RAYS.



# ECCĒ TERRA.

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## I.

### THE PARALLEL RAYS.

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**H**ISTORY holds a high place in public esteem. And deservedly. It is both entertaining and useful in a high degree. We know of no better instructor in the science of human nature, that exceedingly practical science. In the conduct of our affairs it gives us the benefit of many ages of experience. To governments it is perpetual privy councillor. Society could hardly do without its testings of laws, principles, and institutions. Were we deprived of its lessons on the perils which beset society, and the best methods of dealing with those perils, it would be the eclipse of a great light—very much such a disaster as one would suffer if he should lose from his memory all the records of his past life and be compelled to pursue his way among men with the inexperi-

ence of an infant, though with the age of a Methusaleh.

A still higher place in the public regard has lately been obtained by *Natural Science*. Perhaps deservedly. It gives a very pure and wholesome pleasure. It strengthens, expands and disciplines the intellectual powers. As a purveyor to the more practical side of human life its uses are enormous and almost innumerable. Commerce sails safely on all seas with the help of its chronometers, nautical almanacs and star-seeking instruments. It is the mother of inventions: from its teeming womb come the leading contrivances which have added so immensely to the safety, conveniences and powers of our modern life. Some claim that the study of nature is the creator of the nineteenth century. Certainly not a farmer ploughs the land, not a sailor ploughs the sea, not a printer makes up his forms, not a manufacturer turns the power on his looms, not a trader or broker sends orders by cable, not a sick man takes his medicine, not a woman does her housekeeping, not a day-laborer works with mattock or hod,—not a person, whatever the name or work in this toiling and moiling and swift-handed, swift-footed civilization of ours, but is immensely a debtor (though he is often mysteriously ignorant of the fact) to the sciences of nature. The

peasant has become a king. We make by millions what we used to make by units. We fly where we used to creep. Years of work are condensed into moments. Distant countries say daily Good-Mornings to each other across the oceans. We ride through the seas or under them, over cities or under them, as we please. Science has set to work for us workmen more fleet, tireless, powerful, and yet tractable, than ever Oriental genii, or even the gods of the Greeks and Romans, were supposed to be. Our fathers of only a few generations back, suddenly brought down to our times, would think them almost miraculous. Men now living have almost seen with their own eyes the time when the announcement of some signal discovery was sure to find a profoundly incredulous, if not scoffing, public; now, that public is almost ready to accept on demand the impossible without question; it has seen actually realized so many astonishing and unbelievable things. With eyes aflame and uplifted hands we stand gazing earthward and heavenward, and exclaim, "*What next?*" And we shall accept it when it comes, though it be the Seven Stars or the Seven Thunders.

A still higher place in the public regard than is held by history, and even by natural science in its most genuine and useful forms, is claimed

by Christians for the *Christian Scriptures*. Shall I not say, Deservedly? Beyond all comparison the Bible is the greatest impersonal benefactor the world has ever seen. This follows at once from the fact (which I have sought to make plain in another volume) that the Book is a Divine Message. This Message, as being largely history, has the same sort of uses with other history, though in much larger degrees on account of its far greater reliableness and wiser discriminations; and ministers various pleasure, wholesome instruction, just views of human nature and invaluable suggestions on the management of states and families, as well as of individual life. As being largely science (for it gives us, though in popular forms, the principles of the most effulgent and useful of all the sciences, that of God and duty), it has the same sort of uses with other science, only in much larger degrees, owing to its vastly greater importance, and breadth of application, and variety of literary form; and, as the most universal of all textbooks, has been more of an educational force among the masses, more stimulative of thought and discussion and eloquence and philosophy and literature, and even the fine arts, than any other book. That it wrestles mightily against those gross vices and crimes which exhaust the body, fill prisons, burden the

public with taxes and strike at the very vitals of society, goes without saying; and it is equally plain that it frowns on envies, jealousies, selfishnesses, hatreds and all those evil passions which do so much to vex and disfigure human hearts, disturb the peace of communities and prepare the way for the worst deeds. We see in the Book the guardian, not to say the founder, of homes and of all the home virtues—of parental authority, filial dutifulness, family concords, and fidelities of every name. It beckons men to all the traits of good neighborhood and good citizenship. If families and states do not live in harmony with each other, and in the interchange of all delightful courtesies and good offices, it is not the fault of the Bible. It almost scourges them to such things. It is the foe of social excesses and disorders of all sorts; the upholder of law; the father and mother of industry, prudence, good faith and business integrity. It says to rogues, whether mature or incipient, whether individuals or corporations or states, *Stop Thief!*—says it with a majesty of emphasis such as the united voices of all mankind could not compass—and with the same majestic and menacing voice warns us off from trespassing on each other's rights in all directions. Behold its great placard frowning conspicuously over the fences of all private prop-

erty—itsself the highest fence of all—saying, *No Thoroughfare!* And yet behold the friend alike of labor and capital, of the peasant and the peer, of the masses and the magistrate!—the only daysman that can successfully lay hand upon them both.

But the Bible is not content with negations. To its "*Thou shalt not*" it proceeds to add, "*Thou shalt.*" It summons men to all mutual helpfulness. They must treat each other as brothers. They must be compassionate and loving as well as just, free-handed as well as free-hearted. So it has become the founder and chief supporter of almost all the humane and educational institutions and private charities which are so great a glory of our time. Hospitals, reform schools, ragged schools, infirmaries for the blind or intemperate or idiotic, homes for the aged poor or orphans or incurables,—what an immense variety of such things in every Bible land! Christendom, especially where the Bible is most diffused and influential, is studded with public charities almost as the sky is with stars. Every Bible Christian, doing good to all as he has opportunity, is an incorporated benevolent institution endowed with unlimited privileges of traveling and self-support. Were the world stripped of the educational chairs and fellowships and lectureships



which the Bible has created, our unbelieving scientists would find their financial foundations almost wholly swept away. They would have no platform from which to attack the Bible. They sit at its table and eat its bread, and then, worse than an Arab, waylay and strike at their generous host. It is the old story, old as Judas: "He that eateth bread with me has lifted up the heel against me."

The Bible has been the main factor in making the difference that exists between Christendom and Dahomey. It would be hard to point out any necessity, utility or ornament of our homes that does not credibly say "Mother!" to the Bible, and is not daily carried in its arms and fed at its breasts. For one thing, were woman put back into the position from which the Bible has raised her, what an eclipse we should have!

The Bible is the greatest and cheapest of all known civilizers. This is denied by some who have much to say about Advance and Progress, and who are fond of representing religion as the foe of such things; but it is open to all observation that the little finger of the gospel is thicker than the loins of all these men put together as to practical work in behalf of humanity. Our Bible-sent and Bible-bearing missions have reduced rude languages to writing, created in them a vast and pure literature, founded educa-

tional institutions, revolutionized the healing art, suggested wise laws, relieved and prevented famines, pestilences, wars and superstitions; poured out long-accumulating treasures of art, science, invention and comfort with free hand into the lap of heathendom. In so doing they have wonderfully pushed outward the luminous outposts of civilization, and are fast carrying the nineteenth century to the ends of the earth.

Besides what it does directly with its own hand for the various secular interests of the world, the Bible has been a great pioneer and caster-up of highways for all sorts of beneficent agencies. They best see how to work by the light that shines from its face. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that it furnishes the only foundation, broad and strong, on which Science and other human benefactors can, for any length of time, securely stand, let alone work. Without it, *Omnia ruunt in pejus*.

While thus vigorously shooting their rays into the darkness of distant lands, our Bible missions have reflected great light upon their own. They have opened new highways for Christian commerce, new markets for Christian manufactures, new channels to wealth, comfort and power for Christian peoples. While busy in carrying the gospel to every creature, they do not forget to send back to their native shores

brilliant contributions to Geography, Ethnology, Archæology, Geology, Natural History, Philology and other sciences. In short, the services which the Bible has rendered to the secular interests of mankind are wonderfully great. All other benefactors are but echoes and shadows of this. Never a cornucopia so large and full as that which it holds—never one so freely emptied in every direction; for this Briareus has and uses a hundred hands for its glorious distributions. Were the Bible quite without religious pretensions, it still ought to be crowned as the foremost philanthropist the world has ever seen.

Shall we call that useful, brilliant and revealing thing named History, *Light?* At least a ray. It illumines the past, and, by reflection, the present, and even the future.

Shall we call that more useful, brilliant and revealing thing termed Natural Science, *Light?* At least a ray. It reveals the laws of material nature. In so doing it largely reveals the Author of nature—also innumerable sources of comfort, profit and power. All sensible people allow that it is an illustrious illuminator of our times, and some even go so far as to say that in comparison with it there is no other.

Shall we call that most useful, brilliant and revealing thing known as the Bible, *Light?* At

least a ray. I would much prefer to call it a *sheaf* of rays; brilliant benefactor of the world as it is, grandest illuminator of dark lands and times. It throws more light on the character and will of God, on the nature and destiny of man, on what constitutes a wise and righteous ordering of life, than does anything else we know of. Nothing else can so brighten the world's glooms, whether of sorrow or of sin. While it illumines this world, it discovers to us two other worlds beyond this, and faithfully shows the two paths that conduct to these final and widely-differing homes of mankind.

History, Natural Science, the Christian Scriptures,—certainly these three illuminators of our times are entitled to be called at least so many rays of light. *Are they parallel rays*—and so, when made to enter the eye at the same time, mutually corroborative?

What is the supreme drift of the Bible? What is the great end toward which its Old Testament and New, its histories and poetries and parables and epistles, its examples and instructions and exhortations, tend? Certainly not its secular uses. Many and great as these are, they are merest ciphers by the side of its religious use. So to manifest God and his government as to bring men to honor, love and serve him,—this is evidently the Gulf Stream

to whose warm bosom all other currents are drawn and made tributary.

It is but reasonable to suppose that Natural Science and History have at bottom a like religious bearing. This notwithstanding some professional students of these branches of knowledge have been anything but religious, and have even claimed that their studies teach away from God and his government instead of toward them. We ought not to be surprised at such claims. Is it a new thing for men to misinterpret and pervert the plainest and best of things? Despite the bitter tongues and pens of those men, and their more bitter example, the stress of the reasonable study of nature and history, as well as of the Bible, is strongly toward setting in a striking light the existence, perfections and government of God. It ought to be so; every intelligent Christian knows that it is so. Our case is that of people living in a land all of whose rivers and mountain-ranges descend on a common trend to a common sea, and are seen to do so when one stations himself at a proper elevation, though their parallelism is not visible to him who lives amid the fogs and narrow horizons of the lowlands.

What are Natural Science and History but interpreters of nature and its ongoings? Of course, when genuine, they must be thoroughly

in sympathy with nature. But every intelligent Christian believes that nature and the Bible, as having a common divine Author, must be thoroughly in sympathy with each other. When placed side by side and fairly interpreted they will be found not only not contradictory, but positively explaining, confirming and enhancing each other. They will be found like parallel and complementary rays from the same sun; which have the same brilliant essential nature, move in the same direction, encounter the same obstructions, obey the same laws, are successfully studied by the same methods, conspire to produce the same image, give together a whiter and brighter image of the luminary from which they come than either can do by itself.

So History, Natural Science, and the Christian Scriptures are not only light of various ray, but the rays are *parallel*, and together illumine the character and ways of God as neither could do by itself. As different children of the same parents may be expected to show a family likeness; as different works of the same author may be expected to show certain common features of thought, style and influence; so it may be expected that God's book of *words* and his book of *things*, will, when properly set together, exchange light to mutual advantage. What we actually find different parts of the Bible doing

for each other in the way of mutual interpretation and enforcement (and this, as Christians all know, is very much) we may reasonably look to see done in a good measure by the different parts of that larger Bible which includes the whole scheme of things coming from the divine Hand, together with its outworkings through the ages. We shall see the Scriptures brighter from being set in the light of the results of historic and physical inquiry, and these again brighter from being shone upon by the Scriptures. As a matter of fact, many a dark text has been brilliantly cleared up by the researches of the historian and scientist. At least one man, Bishop Butler, has been made illustrious, not to say immortal, by his success in relieving the Bible of difficulties by comparing it with the constitution and course of nature. On the other hand, the successful scientist or explorer of the past has often taken his inspiration and cue from something he has found in the Bible.

Accordingly, in the present work I propose to show the hand of God in the earth by the joint means of Scripture, Science and History—believing that the picture of this Hand given by these three parallel and complementary rays will be a whiter and brighter one than either could give alone.





II.

GENERAL FACT REVEALED.



## II.

### GENERAL FACT REVEALED.

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**B**ENJAMIN FRANKLIN said in Congress, "I have lived, sir, a long time; and the longer I live the more convincing proof I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of men." Our illustrious American sage and statesman only echoed the thought which the illustrious Roman Cicero had written out some eighteen hundred years before: "Quid enim potest esse tam perspicuum, quam esse aliquod numen quo hæc regantur?"—*What can be so thoroughly plain as that there is some Divinity by whom these things are governed?*

An infinitely perfect Being *ought* to be the ruler of the world. As much is demanded of him by every consideration of justice and kindness. Being infinite, he can give us a government of incalculable value; and, being infinite, to give such a government will be to him no burden whatever. Accordingly, he has given it. As say the Scriptures, "The Lord is a great King over all the earth."

More than this. It would not only be no burden to an infinite Being to maintain a royal government over the world, but he can, just as easily as not, maintain one that deals powerfully with *every* actual event. He is therefore sure to do even as much as this. Accordingly, we find it to be the tenor of Scripture that the God who is "Governor among the nations" and "directeth the steps of a man," and whom we are to ask for "daily bread" and every "good thing," is one without whom "not a sparrow falls," who "numbers the hairs of our heads," whose is "the disposing of the lot that is cast into the lap"—who, in short, "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will;" so that universal Christendom is established in the doctrine not only that God is King, but that his hand potentially touches every event in the whole range of fact—that there is absolutely no particular, however inconsiderable, which is not obliged to ask permission of his sovereignty in order to be, and around which, when it has come into being, do not effulge and throb his all-knowing thoughts and the regulative forces of his sleepless and tireless monarchy.

It should be clearly noticed just what is, and what is *not*, implied in this doctrine of the divine Hand in actual events. To say that the wisdom and power of God are brought to bear in a

commanding manner on every event; that he supervises and, so to speak, manipulates in a royal manner whatever occurs,—is not saying that each event is a just expression of his preferences or that he is active in promoting it. His activity may be that of one who hates and hinders. A government may be fully as active in the way of hindering as in that of helping. A large part of the activity of every human ruler consists in opposing and lessening, as far as possible, undesirable things. Perhaps it would not be too much to say that our civil governments commonly display more power in opposing what is wrong than in promoting what is right. Their laws, their magistrates, their courts, their prisons and other penalties, their armies, their police (that is to say, their most conspicuous and representative things), express the principle of hindrance rather than that of help. They say to disorder and wrong, “We will fight you as well as we can.” And such may be the attitude of the divine government toward many things. The Scriptures say that it is. The sceptred Hand is vastly busy with them; it is above, beneath, on either hand, and within even; but it is as an *enemy*. It is our experience as well as Scripture that the best that can be done with some things is to fight them, to minimize them, to overrule them. And it is

both conceivable and scriptural that the fight may be carried on by a government that brings even infinite resources into the battle, and yet, owing to moral and other limitations, be unsuccessful in winning a complete victory. Actual cases of this sort will hereafter be given. It will appear that there are very many actual events which God neither assists nor favors in any way, but which he struggles against with all the forces he can consistently bring into the field. Sins of all sorts are such events. Every one of them is like a pirate ship beating through stormy latitudes and hunted down by the fleets of all nations.

The doctrine of a divine Hand in every event gives the divine government, even in this world, a very large field. Just think of the number of events about us daily in all the wide realms of mineral, vegetable, brute and human history! Even what happens to a single man from sunrise to sunrise, including his thoughts and feelings, would make a more ponderous journal than ever yet came from human pen. But, like the endless break of waves on the shore; like the endless pulses in the still more restless ocean of air; nay, like the light-waves that come and go in every direction with such amazing swiftness, numbers and complexity in that still wider ocean in which all the stars are

islands,—must be the events of all sorts ever taking place in all quarters and histories. In each of them, however small, we are to hold the hand of God to be royally active.

But this does not express the whole fact. Broad as must be the divine government that bears on every actual event, it is but narrow as compared with that we actually live under. For this covers also the undesirable events which never become actual, but which would become so save for its interference; and we have good reason for thinking that the number of such events must be very great. Every good man, with his small power and wisdom, prevents many evils—suspicions, slanders, hatreds, quarrels, frauds, diseases; in short, sins and sorrows of all names. He hails them while they are yet, as it were, in the offing, and successfully warns them off from the shores of being. Of course, God with his infinite power and wisdom can do infinitely more. Every good civil government has an eye on the homely maxim that “An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure,” and manages to prohibit the arrival of many public evils which it sees approaching. Of course the divine government, with its immeasurably greater foresight and forces of all kinds, can prohibit to a vastly greater extent. Our modern society

has many great institutions, not merely to alleviate and cure existing evils, but also to quite forestall others, to close and bolt the gates of the future against them, to reach forth into the void and cancel their very possibility. This is really the great philanthropy. And it has been very successful. What it does, on by no means an inconsiderable scale, God, the greatest and best-equipped philanthropist ever known, doubtless does on a scale inconceivably large. He is an optimist, and gives us the best possible system. He keeps many a litter of pests from coming to the birth. His amazing fleets blockade all the coasts of being against interloping evils as no scanty dories of our building and ordering can do. It must be that a host of sins and harms find themselves unable to make a landing through that watchful and terrible leaguer on which the sun never sets.

Accordingly, the Scriptures call God "a shield," "a fortress," "a high tower," "a Saviour," "One mighty to save"—epithets that vividly describe how largely he negatives evil for individuals and communities. And so, the world over, we learn to pray, "Deliver us from evil," and to believe that, bad as the state of the world is, it would have been far worse had not God swept with his great hand the expanses before us, and laid waste to the greatest pos-



sible extent the very seeds and possibilities of evil.

This general doctrine of a divine government that extends to all actual events, and even vastly beyond, is illustrated in the Bible by a great variety of examples. There is scarcely any *sort* of thing we can think of, actual or possible, which is not there instanced as touched potentially by the divine sceptre. The movements of the heavenly bodies; the rise and fall of nations; the fortunes and policies of rulers; the course of parties and populaces and armies; victories and defeats; famines and pestilences; the course of each individual life, its prosperities and adversities of all sorts; food, raiment, riches, honor, health, long life, friends, influence, eloquence, wisdom, and their opposites; thoughts, feelings, purposes, sins and virtues in great variety; deliverances from all sorts of evils; conversions, sanctifications, salvation; all sorts of things in the inanimate world, as winds, rains, droughts, storms, calms, crops; in short, the particular things which the Scriptures, in one way or another, say are dealt with by the divine government,—seem to cover by specimen the whole field of being and event. One who will take pains to bring together the vast variety of examples in their Scripture form of statement will feel himself forbidden by them to except

*anything whatever* from the stress of a divine Hand—from the rush of suns and heavenly armies to the ripple of a pool and the beat of an insect's wing, and even to that dim waste beyond where lie unquickened only the seeds and possibilities of the actual. So large an induction of particulars would be enough to establish any scientific doctrine. It is enough to establish the scriptural doctrine of a providence that bears on the whole field of actual and possible event; that is, on every *fact*, for every fact in this world began in an event, and concerns us only as being the source of events.

I have already briefly called attention to the wonderfulness of this universal providence. It is so beyond what human rulers can do! Nay, it is so beyond what our thought can grasp! If you sweep around you a radius of ten feet in every direction you include hundreds of millions of living things, each of which is having at any moment hundreds of millions of changes, chemical, mechanical, vital, spiritual. How unequal are you to the summing up of even these! How much more unequal to the task of bending the horizon of your thought around the *all things* that are, have been, or shall be, or shall have been prevented from being, on this ancient, populous, ever-changing and long-enduring world! Not even an archangel could do it.

And yet all this infinity of things and events is not only "naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do," but they are all actually wrought in by his hand, as the clay is wrought in by the hand of the potter. It is not only as if he were a *Sun-Eye*, piercing the whole earth through and through in every direction with its rays, till all its darkest nooks are flooded with day and each smallest thing shines like a world; but it is as if he were a *Sun-Hand*, grasping the whole great globe, so that every mote feels its throb and pressure, and receives from it innumerable currents and thrills of force and direction.

We are told by some, that in whatever forms force may appear, these are all only different forms of one great physical, unintelligent force, whose essence is *motion*, whose amount is always the same, and which is really the sole author of all events from the fall of a stone to the birth of a thought. It cannot be denied that such a conception has in it an element of grandeur, though we clearly see in its womb all the inanities and follies and mischiefs of materialism.

Others tell us that there is no such thing as an impersonal cause—that the one all-working, ultimate force just spoken of, instead of being a blind property of matter, is really the force

of a personal God; so that he is the sole and direct author of everything that takes place in height or depth, in far or near, in the universe of matter or mind. And this conception we must allow to have even a grander element than the other; for certainly an infinite personal force is grander than an equally powerful impersonal.

But the grandest conception of all is that of a universe of efficient material and spiritual causes mingled in one seething ocean of energies, but all watched over and comprehended and dominated at every point and at every moment by an infinite personal God. This conception has the majesty of a most useful fact; the others have only such as can belong to a most harmful hypothesis. This invests nature with the grandeurs of religion; the others make religion impossible. This permits us to think that God has the glory of perfect righteousness; the others show us either an irresistible Fate or a huge Person disfigured with the blots and scars and rags of a wicked world which he has made such. This gives us a glorious empire; the others show us only a vast factory.

III.

NEED OF FURTHER ILLUSTRATION.



### III.

#### NEED OF FURTHER ILLUSTRATION.

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THIS doctrine of a divine Hand present and working in all earthly facts is now fully admitted by all who admit a personal God. The old Epicureans, who supposed that Deity does not even concern himself with the affairs of men, any more than most of us do with ants, left no children. Not so the Stoics. Their descendants are everywhere. Are not we among them? Are not most of us almost as stony as we are orthodox? We freely allow that God governs, and even that there is more or less of his government in *every* actual event, and that a host of evil events have been kept from becoming actual by his hand; but in most cases the admission is merely intellectual and without vividness. We consent to a cold abstraction, to Euclid's triangles in the original Greek, to an old-world fossil that has little or nothing to do with the present. We bow distantly to a shadow on the horizon—a shadow which though vast has no weight. It influences neither our feelings

nor our conduct. And, practically, each event, whether in private or public life, is viewed as, in the last analysis, wholly produced and shaped by second causes. This view is the every-day working dress of our thoughts in which we feel most at home.

This is a calamity. We miss a most elevating conception. We fail of a great restraining and reforming power. We do great injustice to one of the sublimest, and at the same time most useful, facts that ever challenged attention.

Can nothing be done to break up this most hurtful stupidity? Is there no way of giving to this great but shadowy divine Hand something of the vividness of an actual perception?

Certainly there is. Not a few persons have found this way, and have come to live daily as in view of the divine government. And yet it is not an easy matter, as you may see by noticing the ways in which this government generally acts.

#### THROUGH THE ORIGINAL FRAMEWORK OF THINGS.

Some go so far as to say that the divine government is *altogether* by this means. They speak as follows. In the beginning, God, having before his thoughts all possible events, and select-



ing such as he saw it best to have realized, created secondary causes, such in their nature, number and arrangement as would of themselves produce in their proper time and place all the good results possible to his personal activity. The system was made self-governing. A divine government is really brought to bear on every point of space and mote of fact; but the government was incorporated in the original framework of things, so that there has been no occasion for a personal divine action since the creation, and of course there has been none.

In favor of this view it is said that it must have been perfectly easy for an Infinite Being to make such a comprehensive, self-governing system complete by one stroke of his will—that to make instead a system requiring all along the ages more or less divine superintendences and actions, none of them a whit easier than the comprehensive one supposed, would be irrational and contrary to that Nature whose observed habit is to reach her ends without superfluous steps. To which we may answer that there is no evidence that God can make a system of second causes that, by itself, can give as complete results as *both* himself and itself can do—that, on the contrary, this is quite improbable; especially as it would imply not only

that God can make the equal of himself so far as government is concerned, but make that other self out of the gross and imperfect substance which we call matter, together with that less gross but still imperfect substance we call spirit in men and brutes.

Another reason given for favoring the view that represents the divine Hand as working altogether through the original structure of things is, that it alone gives full scope to science—science, which must be permitted to assume that every event is explainable by second causes, and which has succeeded in explaining by this means so many things once credited directly to the Supreme Being. To this we answer that this view really gives no more scope to science than does that which conceives of the system of second causes, after its creation, as still followed by an active superintendence of the Creator through all its history: for this last view does not necessarily suppose in the system any new force in kind; only such as belongs to men and other spiritual beings with intelligence and will. If the action of these lower spiritual forces cannot be denied, and does not restrict the scope of science, neither does the action of a divine force. The fact is, all spiritual forces have their fixed natures and laws as truly as has matter, only

they are widely different from the material, and harder to be interpreted. Science is quite at liberty to do its best at interpreting all these laws, and at explaining events by them after the most rigorous scientific fashion.

Did God, some thousands or millions of years ago, make his clock, wind it up, set it agoing, and has it been running by itself ever since totally without any action on his part? The practical tendency of such a view is greatly against the truthfulness of it. It crowds the idea of God and his government into the background, into the horizon and below it; in fact, hides it behind a whole world of secondary causation; whereas the other view brings us into close quarters with the great religious ideas, sets our daily lives face to face with the King, and is greatly fitted to restrain and elevate us. Which view, then, would God be likely to lay a foundation for in actual fact?

Further, the clock-theory of the divine government really negatives all evidence from nature of the existence of a God. If the present system of second causes is able to get on just as well without a God as with him—that is, if mere nature can by itself work out all the marvellous constructions, metamorphoses and reproductions constantly taking place—it is hard to see why it could not, single-handed, with its

eternal atoms, have wrought out the first constructions, supposing there were such.

But one almost needs to apologize to a believer in the Scriptures for spending time on such arguments. "My Father worketh hitherto"—"known to God are all his works from the beginning of the world." The clock-theory of divine government defies the whole tenor of revelation. The very fact of a revelation made at intervals through centuries defies such a theory. Through Old and New Testaments God appears as "nigh at hand and not afar off," and no fair-minded reader fails to get from the Book the idea that the divine power is a current factor and actor in all times.

But while we deny that the divine government is wholly by means of the original structure of the system, we cannot deny that it is partly so. Of course that original structure was meant to further certain purposes of the Creator—to promote, hinder, regulate, the occurrence of certain events. It may not give a *sufficient* force; it may and often does require to be supplemented by something else; but it does go to shape much that occurs. The inclination of the earth's axis necessitates certain consequences as to climate and seasons, and was meant to do so. The laws of optics, of magnetism, of chemistry, of meteorology, of

health,—we are compelled to have more or less respect to all such laws, and the Creator meant that we should. Men, in all their movements, must take into account the primitive laws of both matter and mind, just as the sailor must take account of the winds and currents and lee shores in his navigation. First and last, it is a wonderful deal of governing that these laws do among men and other living beings; among inanimate things their authority is still more complete. God meant it should be so. And he often exacts heavy penalties to enforce his meaning.

#### BY CURRENT USE OF SECOND CAUSES AS INSTRUMENTS.

The divine action may be a remote link in a chain of causation or a near one. The wave that reaches us may have been started by a stone a mile or a foot away. The news in my ear may have come through three mouths or three hundred. Relays of messengers may stretch across a town, a province or a continent. As man, even the humblest (and even the pigmiest insect), can and does act directly on matter, and start chains of secondary causation more or less long for the purpose of controlling events, and finds it

useful, not to say indispensable, to do so, it seems quite likely that God can do and does do as much.

Nay, the Bible says that he has often used second causes for instruments; as when he established subordinate "thrones, principalities and powers;" sent angels on his errands; commissioned Moses for the Exodus; raised up judges to deliver Israel; stirred up adversaries to Solomon; smote backsliding Israel with "the rod of the children of men;" made Paul a "chosen vessel" to himself.

#### BY PERSONALLY SUGGESTING IDEAS AND MOTIVES.

The class thus reached is vastly larger than the last. It is the whole animal kingdom. Wherever intelligence and will, in any degree, are found, there God can sway actions by suggesting ideas and motives, not of the nature of law, but which go to conduct, perhaps unconsciously, in the right direction. And this is only saying that he can do what the humblest man, and even the humblest insect, is accustomed to do freely. From the king on his throne to the tiniest living mote visible under the microscope, each has his motions influenced more or less by thoughts which some other creature, it may be of the puniest, has sug-

gested. The chirping of a cricket can call up trains of thought that lead to most important actions. The struggles of a spider to fasten its thread satisfactorily actually started such feelings and plans in Robert Bruce as won back for him his kingdom. Men are continually shaping the conduct and character of other men, especially of the young, by suggesting in them, it may be all undesignedly, currents of ideas whose trend is in the direction desired. Cannot God do even vastly more than other beings in this way? What they do with means cannot he do without? And is it not likely that he finds useful a method of control which is found, sooner or later, indispensable to every other being with whom we are acquainted?

Nay, the Scriptures tell us that God puts it into the heart of kings to fulfill his will; that he gives his people "in the same hour what they ought to speak"—that is, words as well as ideas; that he puts thoughts and purposes into ravens that feed his Elijahs, into lions which spare his Daniels, into fishes which appear where and when wanted with tribute-money in their mouths. Dreams are but trains of ideas, and though they often "come from the multitude of business," yet they sometimes have come by the inspiration of God. "In a

dream, in a vision of the night, . . . then he openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instruction."

BY DIRECT PERSONAL ACTIONS OF THE SECONDARY ORDER; THAT IS, ACTIONS SUCH AS SECOND CAUSES ARE EQUAL TO PRODUCING, THOUGH THEY DO NOT ACTUALLY PRODUCE THEM.

We act *directly* to bring about events—not merely as bodies, but as spirits. With our own hands, without any axe or saw or other instrument, we bring about what we want; nay, our *minds* have a way of acting directly on the matter composing our bodies and producing at pleasure various movements, as when we will to move hand or foot. What the human spirit can do, and finds it desirable to do largely, God can do, and probably does. A government that undertakes so much as does God's and that is bound to have things as well done as possible, will be likely to avail itself of all possible ways of bringing itself to bear on events. But it must often happen that small degrees of power and pressure from the divine Hand will be all that is needed to secure what is wanted or is best—just as men find that for many purposes the smaller degrees of their force will answer quite as well as, or better than, the larger. It is only occasionally that the giant finds it neces-



sary to put forth all his resources and do what nobody else can do. Nine-tenths of the time his actions are level with the powers of ordinary persons. So of governments. Their actions show all grades of power, from that expressed by splendid armies down to that expressed by the pettiest policeman. And so, doubtless, the divine force about us is graduated according to the work to be done; and many things requiring but, as it were, the lifting of a divine finger to do them, God does not expend upon them the whole breadth of his hand. It is very likely that with him, as with us, by far the greater part of his direct actions bring into play only a small part of his resources, and are quite on the plane of secondary causation. Some specimens of this are given in Scripture. God utters an audible voice; so does man. He sends a messenger; so does man. He takes away life; so does man. He shakes the earth; so do struggling vapors and gases. He sent dreams; so do second causes, as says the Scripture when it says, "A dream cometh through the multitude of business." A large part of actions ascribed to him are presumably not beyond the power of angels and devils if left to themselves. Indeed, the Bible attributes to evil spirits great signs and wonders which might, "if it were possible, deceive the very elect."

## BY MORAL LAWS.

God has given to man various rules for his conduct which he can obey or not as he pleases, but which are accompanied with penalties for disobedience. Such rules and penalties are found in the Scriptures; which have already made their way to a large section of mankind, and are destined to reach all. But besides these biblical laws there are others which from the beginning have been generally known among men—viz. the laws of conscience, the laws written on the heart, those convictions of right and wrong and of accountableness for resisting them which are common to men. Some of these duties, like old inscriptions on monuments in damp and changeable climates, are more or less defaced, and sometimes they seem almost rubbed out; but they were evidently original inscriptions on human nature—inscriptions writ large and cut deep, however worn by time, bad weather and rough usage. Men at large have always felt that they would be held to account, at least in another life, for their conduct in this.

These convictions, whether they came from a primary divine revelation or from the moral intelligence implanted in human nature by God, are divine laws; and they have more or less

regulative force wherever known. God governs by them as well as by the original structure of the system.

Such are mainly the ways in which the divine Hand does its work. Sometimes, however, it is in the way of *direct personal actions of the truly divine order*; that is, such as *only* God can do. Samson was daily doing many things which any of his neighbors and countrymen could do; but times came when the actions required of him were such as only he could furnish. He must defeat an army single-handed; he must bow a temple into ruins. Our civil governments are daily doing common things which only ask for common forces—it may be forces almost beneath account in their smallness—but times at last come round when the nation rises to the majesty of some great effort that astonishes mankind and glorifies history. It is so with all the great inanimate second causes. They are found ranging through all the gamut of energy according to circumstances—now holding a planet to its orbit, and now drawing a feather to the ground. We would naturally think it might be so with God—that while a government dealing with minutest details, as we have seen that his does, would abound in all the smaller examples of force, it would in course of time be found putting forth

those glorious and sublime measures of power to which God alone is equal, and which as soon as we see we say, Behold the Almighty! Accordingly, the Scriptures shôw him as a worker of such miracles as cry *None but He! None but He!*—sending the Deluge, dividing the sea, raising the dead, speaking storms into calms, giving whole limbs to the maimed,—in short, doing a multitude of things which none but he could do. As soon as we see them the question of their origin is settled. “Cold weather cometh out of the north—with God is terrible majesty.”

But we do not now see any such divine working. And generally the Hand has done its work without the usual sensible accessories of human governments. The Monarch himself is never visible to us. No throne, no palace, no splendid court, no celestial offices or police or armies, illuminate our sky. We see no prison, no courts in session, no arrest of offenders, no uniformed agents of any sort. Such things exist; they have been seen in glimpses by a few privileged men; but to the mass of mankind they have always been matters of faith only. We live on the frontiers of the empire; the capital with its golden pomp we have never visited; and though the pulse of the central authority really beats strongly on our distant

shores, it is not easily traced back by our thought across an ocean rough with ten thousand other pulses to the metropolis from which it comes.

Accordingly, we are not able to illustrate the doctrine of God's universal providence as we do the doctrine that "it is appointed unto men once to die." On receiving this latter teaching we can at once proceed to verify it in detail from observation, and so make it exceedingly vivid and impressive. Can we do as much for the doctrine that God's hand is in every fact of the world? Most certainly not. Though in some events that Hand as plainly appears as it did to the appalled court of Belshazzar, in by far the greater number of cases it is quite impossible for any human gaze, however able and patient, to single out from the maelstrom of various activities concerned in an event that part which belongs to God. The forces of inanimate nature are there; also those of man; also, perhaps, those of created beings above man; and though among these forces, beyond a doubt, is a commanding divine element, no human eye is sharp enough to recognize it as such. Can I see it in the election of last week? On general principles I *believe* God to have been active in it. But I am also sure that other forces in great variety were present; and no mere

looking of mine could ever show me the presence of anything else. What I see are the primary meetings; the canvassing of partisans; the scudding cloud of political pamphlets, journals, books; the whole noisy machinery of party politics; the busy interplay of human ambitions, interests, passions,—all heavily and continually pattered on by innumerable modifying influences of inanimate nature. That is all I see. For aught mere sight can tell me God is not in the election at all. If one points out to me some useful results of the election and exclaims, *Behold the hand of God!* I cannot but remember that second causes also can do useful things; also, that if the seeming advantages of one event prove in it the presence of a divine Hand, the seeming disadvantages of another event prove in it equally well the absence of such a Hand. It is necessary to confess it. The golden thread of supernaturalism that actually runs through all the tangled web of public and private affairs only here and there comes to the surface and is recognizable by the eye.

IV.

ILLUSTRATION BY GREAT EXAMPLES.





## IV.

### ILLUSTRATION BY GREAT EXAMPLES.

#### PART FIRST.

#### GREAT FACTS NOT INCONSISTENT.

**U**NDER these circumstances it is not an easy matter to keep the eye of the soul widely open on the fact of the great Hand in the earth. But it can be done, for it *has* been done.

“In each event of life how clear  
Thy ruling Hand I see!”

sang a certain poet, and still sing not a few hearts. A most enviable song! How did they get to sing it? No doubt the answer is mainly found in “The pure in heart shall see God.” No doubt it was mainly through gracious hearts and gracious ways of living—the greatest of all known torches for showing God and his words. But this torch may be reinforced as by jets of oxygen by *great examples* of divine action in some of the most notable facts of the world.

We will now proceed to look at some of

these. When we have finished our survey it may be seen that we have shown three things:

I. *No facts on the earth are inconsistent with the divine Hand being in them;*

II. *Many facts positively harmonize with the idea that a divine Hand is in them;*

III. *Not a few facts positively demand the presence in them of a divine Hand.*

By making good these three statements we furnish not only striking *examples* of divine government, but also such an experimental proof of its universality as is furnished by proving similar statements for a divine Framer of nature in the argument from design. Every object will not answer for this latter argument. The common compounds, the endless stones, the hosts of things that lie about the confines of the organic and inorganic, cannot be appealed to; only those more elaborate organisms that can be shown to have had a beginning, especially these as appearing in endless number and variety. These imperatively demand a glorious Designer for themselves; and, such a Being once found, the way is easy to admit that he framed *all* nature—in view of the fact that all remaining objects are either such as are not inconsistent with that idea or positively harmonize with it. In view of similar facts those events in great number and variety that *imperatively*

*demand* a divine Governor for themselves open the way to admit that he governs universally. They are like certain stars, which, having been analyzed by the spectroscope and found to contain earthy matters on fire, forthwith become to us brilliant specimens of what all those other stars contain which circumstances do not permit us to analyze.

#### I. NO FACTS ON THE EARTH ARE INCONSISTENT WITH A DIVINE HAND BEING IN THEM.

Temptation, sin, suffering, error, and, to a considerable extent, the unequal distribution of good in the world (vast facts, all of them), are looked upon as stumbling things by not a few when called on to admit that every fact about us includes a busy divine Hand. Are they really inconsistent with the admission?

##### I. TEMPTATIONS.

Temptations to what is wrong or harmful are an immense class of facts, crowding every country and age of which we know. Each person is tempted—tempted daily, tempted in ways without number. Sometimes the assaults are simply terrible—terrible both as to the vices and harms to which they urge, and as to the force with which they urge. Never was city more beset with armies, never ship more stressed to-

ward breakers by conspiring gale and current, than is yonder Noah in the midst of antediluvian wickedness, yonder Lot amid the vileness of Sodom, yonder Joseph in the house of Potiphar, yonder child being brought up in the worst den of the worst street of the worst city in the world. Can it be that a good divine Hand is concerned in every such temptation? Let us see.

Suppose the following things to be true. It is well for a man to have a nature capable of being solicited toward what is right and useful. Such a nature implies a capacity to be solicited in an opposite direction. Opposite solicitations can, in all cases, be successfully resisted, either by a native power of self-restraint or by aid from without, or by both. Where thus resisted they become a great moral discipline and give birth to a strength and splendor of virtuous character otherwise impossible. That this splendid result may follow every temptation, God supplies all the help possible to infinite wisdom and power; for example, sometimes wholly suppressing temptations that would prove too powerful; making others as favorable as possible in regard to degree, time and other circumstances; forewarning of, forbidding to yield to, calling to watchfulness and prayer against, promising and threatening, minister-

ing strength by his Holy Spirit and providence and word. And all to such good purpose that there is absolutely no one, however stormily he may be tempted, but may get from the temptation almost infinite good to himself, and so to others who come under his influence.

Not a few do this. Their fight conquers for them whole provinces and kingdoms of character. Their storm at last sends them into harbor, not only without the loss of a single spar or rope, but triumphantly drawing after them more captive galleons than ever came in, heavy and glittering, from the Spanish Main.

I say, *suppose* these things are so. Certainly not an unreasonable supposition. It looks as though it might be true. It is at least what the scientists would call a good working hypothesis. It would be hard, not to say impossible, to show that it does not conform to fact in every particular. While not a single one of the particulars it includes is *a priori* incredible, or even unlikely, most of them are demonstrated by either experience or Scripture. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man

is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed ;” “ God is faithful who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able ; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it ;” “ In this manner pray ye, Lead us not into temptation.” How much is implied in such passages as to the degree and kind of work done by the divine Hand in connection with the temptations of the world !

If our supposition expresses the actual state of things, it follows not only that there is a great divine Hand active in connection with all temptation, but that the activities are of such sorts as an infinitely wise and good Being may consistently put forth, and is even bound by his wisdom and goodness to put forth. The only action of his that has any look to the contrary is his initial allowing of temptation at all ; but if this is a necessity to his having the best sort of human nature in his world—viz. one to which virtue is possible (that is, one that can be solicited toward the right and yet be free to refuse)—then even this cannot be charged as inconsistent with the goodness of the divine government. No one has a right to complain of a tempted lot of which he can avoid all the evils, and out of which he can wring almost immeasurable good, and toward which God stands

ready to grant, especially on being asked, any amount of help that may be needed to convert the contest into a victory, the cross into a crown.

## 2. SINS.

Temptations, in cases innumerable, result in sins. These dreariest events of our own time have made dreary nearly all time. Since the first apostasy sins have been a staple product of the ages. The world has fed on them as on bread, and become a lazaretto throughout. And *such* diseases! So many, so various and so dreadful! Were a thunderbolt let loose every time an enormous crime is done, the heavens would quake with one continuous and intolerable roar. History is pocked with outrageous abominations. Wars, cruelties, murders, frauds, profligacies, slaveries, apostasies,—take your choice, O historian, as to the direction in which you go, you shall wade chin-deep through such things; through seas of ink. The ink with which you write is not by any means as black as the injustices and perjuries and vices you describe. Nay, quit your ink and write with blood, for enough human blood has been wickedly shed to fatten the soil of all the world. Enough human souls have been deliberately corrupted to rottenness to poison whole continents and smell to heaven. The plague is

everywhere. There is not a bit of thoroughly sound flesh in all this human world. Even good men have to say, "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing."

Is it possible that this wonder-sinfulness, in all its length and breadth and in every instance, includes a busy divine Hand? Let us see.

Let us *suppose* the following things. God is not the responsible author, or even abetter, of any sin whatever. On the contrary, he dislikes and opposes every sin in all the ways open to infinite wisdom, power and goodness. He only allows it in any case as a grim necessity, so far as he is concerned, of that free moral nature and government which to dispense with would be to dispense with the possibility of virtue itself. It is desirable that a part of the world's inhabitants have not the nature of stones or of vegetables, but vastly higher natures, like God's own, in being capable of virtue. Natures capable of virtue are by that very fact also capable of sin. So God cannot prevent sin among us by mere physical omnipotence. The best he can do with such natures is to bring influences to bear on the will, persuading it in its freedom to decide against sin. Such influences he does not spare, but by his word or Spirit or providence, or all these, endeavors to enlighten men



in regard to the evil of sin, dissuades from it, forbids it, threatens and promises heavily against it, marshals circumstances against it, counteracts and overrules as far as possible its natural effects. In fine, his actions as to sin are such that he does all he can, consistently with retaining a free moral nature in man and the best possible moral system, both to prevent sin and to recover from it, and, when neither is possible, to neutralize its effects. Not merely by conscience and the word, but also directly by his Spirit and his own busy right hand, he is incessantly and wonderfully acting for these ends.

If, notwithstanding all, the man will go on to the sin, God endeavors to minimize it, atones for it, forgives it if repented of, does all he consistently can to recover from it, perhaps chastises it, circumscribes and defeats its natural effects as far as possible, and, as a last resort, punishes it. In short, every sin that occurs represents a vast amount of antagonistic divine action. A fire burns in it as it did in the thorn-bush that Moses saw, or as does the electric glory in the black bosom of a storm-cloud.

This is at least a plausible supposition. It is accepted as satisfactory by multitudes of Christian people, being, as they think, expressly taught, as to most if not all its particulars, so

fully and variously in Scripture that they are compelled to accept it. And certainly it has in itself an aspect of reasonableness. To affirm that it *cannot* be true, or even that the likelihoods are against it, is more than careful and conscientious reasoners would venture upon. *A priori*, it is altogether credible.

And what if the supposition agrees with fact? Then it follows not only that every sin carries with it an immense amount of divine action, but that most of these actions are not only not inconsistent with divine goodness, but are even positively and loudly demanded by it. There is only one particular which can be supposed to be an exception. That is the initial allowing of sin. But if sin is a necessity to God in every case in which it occurs—necessary because it is on the whole best for man to have a free moral nature—then how is a shadow, even the slightest, cast on the goodness of the divine government?

No, there is nothing in sin to hinder our accepting the doctrine that there is a divine Hand in every instance of it as really as there was in the riotous and sacrilegious halls of Belshazzar. What a flaming, kingly Hand that was! Right in the midst of the wickedness, and yet not partaking of it! On the contrary, a great, warning, resisting, protesting, primitive Force

which got not a shade on its brightness from its bad surroundings. A Hand can burn and sway as well in the bosom of the night as of the day. The sceptre of a human king is as much at home among disorders, corruptions and crimes as elsewhere. Why not that grander sceptre?

The Bible is one huge protest against sin. To be consistent God must act against it as well as talk against it; and, since acting mightily against every instance of it is just as easy to an infinite Being as acting against a single instance, it is certain that such mighty personal action is really, though invisibly, at work as a hostile force wherever and whenever sin is found.

### 3. SUFFERINGS.

Another great class of facts, found in the greatest profusion in all times and countries—not only in those known to written history, but also in those buried in the mausolea of geology.

Men have always died, and found their way to the grave by rough and thorny roads. Not a day without something disagreeable; some days full of vexatious experiences; occasionally an experience that amounts to anguish. And sometimes anguish is heaped on anguish.

What prolonged tortures are inflicted by some diseases, by some crushing accidents, by human and inhuman inquisitions! What terrible disappointments, anxieties, despairs, sometimes make a still severer inquisition for the soul! How famines, pestilences, wars, cataclysms every now and then, put whole nations on the rack! So it has always been. Not a human grave has yet been made except by a spade in the form of a cross. Some say that former times were even more trying than the present—that the mountains of ignorance, superstition, absolutism and depravity, like the other Alps, have been slowly wearing down under the wave-beat of the ages and letting in upon us more and more of the light and cheer of Heaven. Doubtless it is so. The “good old times,” the “brave days of old,” were, after all, the saddest of all. History is a fearful thing—till we get used to it. We walk through its ghoul-haunted and shrieking shades with hair scarcely less electrical than if they were those of Dante’s *Inferno*. Such wars, such tyrants, such flailing of the masses to pieces!—ah, antiquity was a monster! It had no bowels of compassion. Man trod man as the mire of the streets. “And the earth was filled with violence”—while one Flood was experienced, several floods were deserved.

Now, is it possible that such facts as these—casting such terrible shadows across all countries and times—include a busy divine Hand? Let us see.

*Suppose* the following things to be true. Much suffering flows naturally from much sin—sin, the parent of such things as selfishness, envy, jealousy, malice, remorse; sin, that conflicts with the laws of nature, and so implies struggle, discontent, vexation, anxiety, defeat. Also, it is well that sin should be allowed to show forth, to a certain extent, its evil nature by its evil fruits. It is fitting that so sinful a race as ours should not have a Paradise to live in, but should have in the form of pain more or less tokens of divine displeasure—indeed, severe chastisements and punishments. Still, no one suffers more than an enlightened conscience tells him he deserves. And, such as the suffering is, it need continue but a short time—a time so short relatively to our whole duration that it ought in practice to count for nothing, as do the relative nothings of the mathematics. Besides, human suffering in this world is by no means an unmixed evil while it continues, but often enhances enjoyment by its sable background; calls forth delightful benevolent activities; furnishes the world with many splendid examples of patience, fortitude, trust,

heroism; and in the case of every man *may* be the means of almost unlimited moral improvement to himself, and so to others.

Now, let us *suppose* that God is in these facts in the following manner. He is incessantly active in the effort to dry up the sources of all suffering in sin. He actually cancels or averts, especially in the case of such as ask his help, many sorrows which but for his interference would have made human life far more thorny than it is. What cannot be wholly done away with consistently with those general laws indispensable to every great and wise system, and with his character as magistrate over sinners who need to be chastised, punished, reformed, he makes as small as possible consistently with these essentials. What suffering remains after this paring process he aims to make fruitful in the largest possible advantage to the sufferer, and also to others whose orbits fall within or intersect his, and for this end never for a moment ceases to manipulate the suffering and the men with all the forces of his wisdom and strength; and is so successful in his work that not only great improvement in character often takes place under the discipline of trouble, but there is not a cross in the whole round of human experience by which the sufferer may not, with the help of a divine lifting,

climb to noble heights of virtue, and finally to that God who wipes away all tears.

But suffering is not confined to responsible man. It overflows from him on all the subject races in a mighty freshet. They are worried, hunted, victimized by each other as well as by ourselves. And long before man appeared in the world with his iron flail they were scarcely better off. They had but one tyrant the less. The rocks tell a dismal story, and tell it loudly. Species after species was swept away. Chase, violence, blood, were the order of the day of the long ages. From their very beginning the brute races preyed on each other without stint, and, evidently, were designed to do so. The fossil world is largely a petrified groan.

Such is the view of the situation taken by many who are tempted to ask how the sufferings of the world can consist with the idea that there is a divine Hand busy in every one of them. And, however we may object to their strength of statement and depth of coloring, we cannot deny that this "whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now."

What can be said to such a fact by those who hold to a good governing God whose Hand is concerned in absolutely everything?

Let us *suppose* again, as follows. By far the

larger part of brute experience, like the human, is pleasurable. Having a far less sensitive and delicate organization than ourselves, the races below us suffer far less than we should under the same circumstances. They have little of that faculty of anticipating trouble from which so much of human suffering comes. Even the pain they feel in dying by violence may be very small, for there is reason to believe it so in the case of men with their finer sensibilities. Livingstone says that one stroke from the paw of a lion preparing to devour him left him without pain, even that of fear. Muscular convulsion and distortion are no sure sign of suffering, but are even sometimes the sable dress worn by actual enjoyment. So that it is by no means beyond belief that the death of brutes in the line of their function as food for others is positively pleasurable. There is such a thing as *euthanasia*. But euthanasia, with a succession of individuals and races perpetually rejuvenating the earth, may give a larger sum of happiness than any other possible system.

Still, let us grant that after all such abatements there is, and always has been, much real suffering among the brutes. How great is this remainder? Is it greater than is required to meet the following possibilities? *First*, it may be that the best, not to say the only, means of



guiding the lower animals away from hurtful and destructive paths are the thorn-hedges of pain on this side and on that. *Second*, it may be that most people are right in tacitly assuming, as they do, that a certain low measure of depravity, responsibility and improbability belongs to brutes, so that for them pain as chastisement, discipline, punishment, is not out of place, and that the same general sort of divine dealing which is proper for us may be proper for them.

-I say, *suppose* these things are so. I do not affirm them (there is no present need); I only suggest them as a reasonable hypothesis to account for the facts. Is the hypothesis incredible, or even unlikely? It certainly would be hard to show that it is so in a single particular. It has a look of reasonableness and verisimilitude, finds great support in Scripture; at the very least is what scientists would call a "good working hypothesis." It *may* be true.

But *if* true, it follows not only that a divine Hand is largely active in connection with every sorrow, but also that many movements of that Hand are positively demanded by the divine goodness. Even the initial permission of suffering—the only thing about it that for one moment can be supposed to be at war with the doctrine of a universal Providence that is

good as well as divine—appears as a grim necessity to a just and wise government over a depraved world—a world which is itself the grimmest necessity of all.

The well-known tenor of Scripture, recognized in all Christian creeds and practice, teaches us that “affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground;” that God appoints or royally manipulates all trials; that he is open to prayer in regard to every one of them; that for the good man he actually secures that all things (afflictions) shall work together for his good; that in the case of no one and in no case does he “willingly afflict the children of men, but for their profit, that they may be partakers of his holiness.”

#### 4. ERRORS.

Another great family of stumbling facts. Errors are the weeds of opinion, and, like other weeds, flourish luxuriantly all over the world. Who knows an infallible man? The wisest and most careful fall into mistake on all sorts of subjects—business, social life, politics, medicine, science, religion. To some men mistakes seem to come in flocks, as kites to carrion, and never was unfortunate ship more weighted with barnacles than are not a few

clude and reckless thinkers with errors on the most important subjects.

See what *religious* errors! Our first mother fell into the mistake of thinking that eating the forbidden fruit would make her a goddess; her children very soon made the still greater mistake of thinking that there was any number of gods; and the greatest mistake of all was made when, still later, men shut their eyes on the heavens and the earth and thought there was no God. The bottomless pit of thought is materialistic atheism. Alas! what numbers are shooting down that pit to-day—some of them shooting stars—exclaiming as they pass out of sight, “No sin, no responsibility, no future state, no soul, no God”! Mohammedanism, Spiritualism, Mormonism, Romanism, and heresies within the Christian Church,—how many, truculent and destructive they are!

Missiles of error and doubt—  
Firebrands, arrows, deaths—sing out  
From our air, as summer sings  
With the rush of insect wings.

Our faith sails on the high seas,  
Where fleets of corsair ideas  
Watch and wander night and day,  
All to bear this prize away.

Fierce slops and acids of thought  
From stills of all lands are brought,

And cast without stint or ruth  
At the roots of each great truth

Think you the leaf will not wilt  
Beneath which such dregs are spilt?  
Think you the fruit will not shrink  
Whose root is drinking such ink?

As well 'mid swamps and miasm  
Think to set up a safe home,  
Or through thick tempests of steel,  
Unmailed, a safe way to feel.

May one toss his flaming brands  
Right and left, with careless hands,  
'Mid your droughty ricks and thatch,  
Thinking naught the flame will catch?

Ho, truth-holding men! beware  
How you sleep and how you dare—  
How you dare with open breast  
Bid the foeman do his best.

See you not that you have need  
Of a shield for this your creed—  
Need to front it every way,  
Need to hold it night and day?

In an air that hums with death  
Naught but this is safe for faith—  
Slime or shot that raineth free  
Meaneth death for you and me.

Man is weak, the false is strong,  
It has friends in all our wrong;  
"Watch and fight and pray" must be  
Daily shield for you and me.

Is it possible that an almighty benevolent Hand is busy in every one of these many assailing errors, even the worst?

See my hypothesis, as follows. Some errors are unimportant, and so in our mathematics we always neglect fractions of a certain grade. Indeed, we may say that some mistakes are more useful than truth would be in their stead: as when the truth would be abused, and so guilt be enhanced; or when a man enters a church, supposing it to be a theatre, and is converted; or misses his road, and so misses the steamer that goes out to sea only to go to the bottom. The finiteness of our faculties, itself a necessity, necessarily breeds more or less error in us if unaided by God; and it may be proper, and even necessary, for God to leave unaided those who do not seek his help, and who need to learn their own weakness without him. And, generally, the attitude of God toward errors is this: he cautions against the more serious of them by name; actually prevents not a few by his word, Spirit and providence; removes, after a while, many which he could not consistently prevent; defeats the natural ill effects of many which he could consistently neither prevent nor remove; is constantly antagonizing all error by antagonizing sin to the utmost and by his utmost efforts at lifting humanity in all respects

to a higher plane of being, as some city is gradually lifted out of its primitive slough, by screws and levers innumerable, into dryness and healthfulness. Even good men are constantly engaged in doing all these things: is it too much to suppose that God is doing them on a vastly larger scale? We will suppose it; and even that, by his manifold "sceptings" this way and that, God actually secures all who yield to his guidance either from error or from all harm from it as he proceeds on his sublime path of making "all things work together for good to them that love God."

Notice that I do not affirm a single one of these particulars. I only suggest them as *possible* truths. That they are at least so much can hardly be questioned by any reasonable person. Indeed, no such person will venture to say that they are *unlikely* even. One does not have to listen very hard to hear in their favor the affidavits of both natural and revealed religion.

But if our supposition really accords with fact, it follows not only that a divine Hand is largely busy within and around every error, as the lightning plays within and around the black cloud, but that the movements of that Hand are such as to manifest rather than discredit the goodness of God. The only thing that for

one moment seems against that goodness is his initial permission of error when he could have prevented it; for doubtless he could have prevented it, since he could have withheld from us intelligence, and thus have made mistakes as impossible to us as they are to stones. Or, without doing this, he might have telephoned a self-evidencing divine voice to our hesitating thought, saying, "This is the way, walk ye therein." But it may be that it would not be best that all men should be stones, or that all the errors that naturally flow from sin should be prevented. For aught any can show to the contrary, a system that guarantees practical immunity from all serious errors to all persons on their complying with certain reasonable conditions would be better than a system dispensing with free agency, or one carrying, as in an omnibus-car, with equal sureness and despatch to the goal of truth the careful and the careless, the industrious and the idle, the earnest inquirer and the pettifogging partisan, the wise and foolish, the righteous and the wicked.

The well-known tenor of Scripture, recognized in all Christian creeds and practice, is to the effect that in all cases of doubt as to what we are to believe or do it is our duty and privilege to appeal to God for help. This means that his hand occupies in a sovereign manner

the whole realm of truth and error—that he can “open the eyes of the understanding,” “direct our paths,” “guide into all truth,” “give all things that pertain to life and godliness,” “open the understanding to understand the Scriptures,”—in short, means that “if a man lack wisdom, let him ask of God,” who “is Light” itself, “who orders the steps of the good man,” and who “will withhold no good thing from them who walk uprightly.”

#### 5. CERTAIN PARTIALISMS.

Looking about among the creatures, we see wide differences as to the measure of “advantages” enjoyed—differences often independent of character. One being is a stone, another a grass, another a worm, another an eagle, still another a man. Men differ vastly among themselves as to beauty, health, strength, wealth, social rank, talents, education, and even moral advantages—not seldom by virtue of mere birth. Born a genius, born wealthy, born a prince, above all born in the bosom of a wise and Christian family and at the centre of the very choicest influences,—this describes the lot of some, while a lot just the opposite in all respects falls to others. Human society is a ladder the topmost rounds of which are in the clouds and the lowest stuck fast in the mire ;



and whatever round the good man may stand upon he is sure to see above him the foot of some sinner who is not worthy to come down and unloose his shoe-latchet. Good Lazarus in his sores and rags waits with the dogs for the crumbs at the gate of wicked and sumptuous Dives. St. Paul clothed with serge and chains stands before brute Nero clothed with imperial purple and jewels.

One *nation* is greatly inferior to another in numbers, geographic position, wealth, power, fame, though greatly superior in character. What was Israel at its best, in point of historic splendor and importance, compared with such heathen nations as the Assyrian, Egyptian, and Roman? A good *cause*, like a good man, is often defeated and trodden in the mire by a bad one—true philosophies by the false, Pythagoras by Ptolemies, orthodoxies by heresies, revivals by backslidings, primitive Christianity by Romanism, the Vaudois by their bloody and misbelieving princes, the Protestant electors by Charles V., Protestantism in France and Spain and Italy by horrible Inquisitions and St. Bartholomews, Reformed by Rationalistic Germany, Poland by her grasping neighbors, Hungary by Austria,—in short, there is neither individual nor nation nor cause, however good, but may be prostrated by its enemy, however bad. This

lies open to all sight on the surface of all history. The past is strewn with wrecks of systems, public morals, institutions, empires—causes that were crushed by foes less deserving than themselves, and sometimes wicked in the extreme—just as the Old World is strewn with noble works of art broken by the hands of rude Vandals, or as wheat is supplanted by tares, a palace by a cabin, a city by a desert, a calm by a storm, summer by winter.

Can a divine Hand that is both just and almighty have anything to do with such partialisms as these? Is there not necessarily injustice as well as inequality in such allotments? Let us see, looking first at the case of *individuals*.

We have been taught, truly or otherwise, as follows. Such worldly distinctions as riches, honors, beauty, fame—and even such things as splendid abilities, and education, and religious advantages—are not always *real* advantages as to either character or happiness; indeed, are never so except as associated with virtue. Cæsar says that even the barbarous Helvetians held, “*consuesse deos immortales, quo gravius homines ex commutatione rerum doleant, quos pro scelere eorum ulcisci velint, his secundoiores interdum res et diuturniorem impunitatem concedere.*” Real disadvantages of one sort are

often offsetted by advantages of another sort which escape our notice and perhaps are invisible; thus, the moral disadvantages of a child born and bred in some den of vice may be compensated by extra measures of a striving Holy Spirit within, which no observation can detect. Certain forms of good, from their very nature, cannot be given to all; for example, the leadership of the Exodus, the Jewish high priesthood, the motherhood of Christ, the office of an apostle. Different positions and functions, and therefore different circumstances and faculties, necessarily belong to the different members of a great and wise system, even as a watch must include many a little pin and tooth and wheel, as well as the conspicuous golden dial-plate, in order that it may answer its purpose. Different persons of the same moral standing require different ways and measures of training in order to the best moral results, as we often observe in children of the same family, one thriving best under the discipline of poverty, another under that of affluence; one under the discipline of sickness, another that of health; one in obscurity, another in the blaze of fame; and, really, the question which God asks in regard to a man is not merely, *What is his character?* but, *What can be made of him?* Also, this life is a small matter compared with the eternal next; so that

outward worldly advantages are of little account in view of our whole duration. Of this duration we see but a small part, and that which comes after death may balance matters between the righteous and the wicked, and show that the providential favors now granted to the latter are only such winning measures and merciful respites as just human governments often grant to disloyal subjects. Less responsibility is insisted on in cases where less advantages are given: the man of one talent is not made answerable for ten talents. The leading advantages of life are accessible to all on the same reasonable terms; and pardon of sin, a noble character, usefulness, divine consolations, brightest hopes, and, finally, eternal salvation, men are welcomed to with as little discrimination as to any city park or thoroughfare on the high seas. Further, all things in a man's condition that are called disadvantages, with the single exception of sin, for which he alone is responsible, may be made stepping-stones to a higher state than he could have reached without them: and spoils of character to any extent may be conquered out of the difficulties and disabilities and troubles at which men often repine; as a man may ascend by some narrow and dim and inconvenient stairs to the top of a tower and to glorious prospects, or as a soldier may

mount into a rich city by means of the very stones hurled against him.

In all this God is infinitely active. He devises and appoints the original faculties and place of every man according to the work he is needed for. He tempers circumstances every moment to these original peculiarities, so as to give the man the best possible environment for the work he has to do and the character he has to attain. He stirs him up to make the most of his circumstances, and, especially if solicited, grants all manner of providential and spiritual aid to his efforts. In short, he keeps perpetual school and university for each human being, and the means and methods of training are as perfectly adapted to each as if there were no others—checking and prompting, forbidding and commanding, guarding and guiding, without measure or rest, so that the final result may be the best, both for the individual and the public, which infinite power and wisdom can secure.

These views, with modifications, apply to those broader partialisms with which history is chiefly concerned. Lapses of communities into error or sin or suffering are only the aggregated lapses of individuals in the exercise of their responsible freedom. Besides, all causes are not good that seem so to our hasty and dull

vision. How often do we find occasion to correct, and even reverse, our first impressions of public measures! And, then, experience goes to show that it is not always best for a really good cause to succeed at once. There is a best time, as well as a best way, for public as well as private successes. The age needs a certain ripeness for them in order to use them. Delays, difficulties, struggles, reverses, can strengthen, purify and ennoble a cause as much as an individual person. And, then, what if every really good cause is bound to succeed at last, and to succeed all the more splendidly by the temporary buffetings which have shaken the oak into strength and a thousand characters into broader faith, fortitude and force?

Certainly, these views have no look of incredibility about them. No one is entitled to set them aside as inadmissible at a glance. On the contrary, they look as if they *might* be true. One undertaking to prove that they cannot be true would have a heavy task before him—would have it even if setting out only to show that they are *improbable*. As suppositions they certainly deserve respect—are at least a good working hypothesis. And Christianity, as well as natural religion, sweats them at every pore. “The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to

the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all." And yet "the lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord;" "Riches and honor come of thee;" "He putteth down one and setteth up another."

But if our suppositions are also facts, it follows not only that the divine Hand is largely in the inequalities of human condition, but that its movements are radiant as the path of a star with wisdom and goodness. Even the initial appointment of such inequalities is no accusation of his justice or kindness. Such things *must* be in every great and wise scheme. But the Hand that manages in these things that must be, and flashes unseen hither and thither, "putting down one and setting up another," buffeting here and caressing there, distributing tears on the one hand and smiles on the other, is not an eyeless fate that knows not and cares not where it smites or lifts, nor yet an ocean that kisses one shore and thunders in storm on another (perhaps the fairest of all), and yet is the unthinking friend of all; but rather the intelligent monarch who is independent enough to sacrifice present appearances that he may in the end do the best thing possible for everybody.

If the sins, errors and sufferings of the world are not inconsistent with a divine Hand being in them, still more are not those events into which these enter more or less largely, but which also include some plain advantages. Such, for example, as these. The persecutions of the primitive Christians, with all the guilt and misery they involved, contributed not a little to the purity and evidence of the infant Church. The fall of the Roman Empire, though tears fell like rain and the Dark Ages followed, helped the general diffusion of civilization and Christianity in Europe. The feudal system and Crusades, with all their follies and mischiefs, were not without their protecting and elevating influences on the rude society of the times. Such men as Alexander, Cæsar, Mohammed, Tamerlane, Napoleon—rough battle-axes as they were—lopped off some excrescences and hewed the way for some improvements. Even the Reign of Terror has furnished useful lessons—notably, that atheism means the disintegration of society. Not a few of the wars, pestilences, famines, have been to nations what conflagrations have sometimes been to cities—consuming rubbish, cleansing dens, finding wood and leaving marble. In short, almost or quite all the dark things of the world have their “coigns of vantage,” and in not a few of



them the advantages are so great as to start the question whether they may not be in a majority. Of course such things are not inconsistent with a divine Hand being in them; for it seems that even sins, errors and sufferings in their purest and most unrelieved form are not inconsistent with it. Still less are those things in which stars glint through the torn clouds, the air grows pure in the sweep of the madcap storm, an oasis is embosomed in the desert, and even fragrant and beautiful flowers spring from an offensive dunghill.

The sun has spots. Science does not require us to explain these spots on the supposition that the heart of the sun is dark and cold, provided they can be explained quite as well on the contrary supposition.

The earth has a broken surface—roughnesses that hinder cultivation, hills up which men toil, precipices down which men fall, mountains that obstruct sunlight and intercourse, uncouth, and even awful, forms of disorder and ruin. The oceans of water and air include many drawbacks, difficulties, dangers, and some tragedies; the atmosphere is often black with clouds, howling with winds, and vivid with smiting lightnings; the seas toss in storm, wear away fruitful coasts, engulf men and property. On all hands it is agreed that philosophy does not re-

quire us to explain these disagreeable things on the supposition that they come from unfriendly sources, because they can be explained equally well, for aught that appears, on just the contrary supposition; viz. that the ruggedness of the land, the mobility of the waters, and the still greater mobility of the atmosphere, are, on the whole, most useful things whose advantages greatly outweigh the incidental disadvantages with which they appear inseparably connected.

So, when we look about us and see a moral system which includes such evils as temptation, sin, suffering and error, neither science nor philosophy requires us to explain them on the supposition that almighty goodness and wisdom have not been active in connection with them; because, for aught that appears, they are explainable equally well on just the opposite supposition; viz. that God brings to bear upon them, in every single instance, the sum of his infinite attributes, but that it is impossible for him to eliminate them any further than he does without sacrificing interests still more valuable than the elimination would be. Wisdom and goodness make heavy limitations on the exercise of even divine power; and there are limitations also in the very nature of power itself. There are things that lie quite without its range.

V.

ILLUSTRATION BY GREAT EXAMPLES.  
PART SECOND.



## V.

### ILLUSTRATION BY GREAT EXAMPLES.

#### PART SECOND.

#### GREAT FACTS POSITIVELY IN HARMONY.

**I**N looking over the world, we find in every age not merely dark things whose consistency with a good divine government that is universal needs to be shown, but we find also a great many bright things whose general usefulness is so clear that, instead of needing explanation, they are seen to be just what one would naturally expect from the hand of a perfect Being. That hand may have directly established them at the first, and ever since may have directly and earnestly supported and cherished them, they are so plainly and confessedly useful.

#### II. MANY FACTS POSITIVELY HARMONIZE WITH THE IDEA THAT A DIVINE HAND IS IN THEM.

Among these facts is the institution of

##### 1. THE FAMILY.

In all ages we find this institution, in a form more or less pure, lying at the foundation of

human society. Evils are often found in connection with it (there are ill-mated, ill-mannered, quarrelsome, and even leprous households), but they are as separable from the family as weeds are from a garden or dirt from our faces. In its own nature the institution is clean and wholesome, and even indispensable. This would be the confession of all intelligent and respectable people. They are shocked at what the absence of the family implies.

As the source of all the precious things suggested by the word HOME; as the mother of the most sacred human affections; as the golden thread on which are strung conjugal, parental and filial loves; as the nurse of order, thrift and just subordination; as a provision for the recognition, support and training of children; as a safeguard against a large class of violent and shameful quarrels, and even against one universal slough of vice and crime,—the family enters into the very foundation of all decent and orderly society. We owe to it a large part of the happiness which has survived the fall; and were the institution ideally perfect in every case, as it nearly is in some cases, it would be a still more brilliant benefactor of the world. It is a world-wide fact and casts light instead of shadow.

An institution like this would come as naturally from the divine Hand as does the water from an opening at the base of some mighty and full reservoir. Its character and effects harmonize perfectly with the idea of such an origin. If we should assert that God originally organized the family by a positive agency, and now guards and promotes it with the utmost resources of his government, the assertion would be one of the most credible of things. The institution is worthy to come from him.

And from him, say the Scriptures, it really comes. Not only is his hand active in and about the family relation (as it is, indeed, in and about sin and error even), but the relation was directly established by his choice and agency, and is guarded and cherished by his providence, laws and Spirit. He started our race in a pair. He continues the sexes in about equal numbers. "He sets the solitary in families;" "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife;" "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder." Marriage is made indissoluble, save for a single cause. The right of parents to honor and obedience from their children is strongly enforced. Both Old Testament and New Testament lay down many rules for family intercourse, the training of children, the

mutual duties of husbands and wives, of parents and children, of brothers and sisters. To say that the moral government of God deals largely in such matters is the same as saying that his providential government is ever powerfully busy in the same.

## 2. CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

In all large communities, present or past, we see persons making laws in regard to the mutual relations of men, trying cases of dispute arising under those laws, and looking after their enforcement. Under the name of patriarchate, or monarchy, or aristocracy, or republic, or democracy, civil government has had our whole race in its hand as far back as history casts light. It must be confessed that its doings have not always been perfectly satisfactory. We have heard of great injustices and oppressions at its hands. Bad laws, bad magistrates, unfaithful judges and courts, are no novelties in any land; and in some lands they are the rule rather than the exceptions. But such evils are *excrescences*—no more essential to a civil government than warts or rags are to a man. Nothing is essential to it but a system of human arrangements for defining and controlling the conduct of men toward each other. Such a system, as it may be, and indeed as it is,



is an undeniable blessing. The worst government that ever was is better than no government at all. And the best conceivable, one rooting itself thoroughly in Christian principles, is an unspeakable godsend to any community. This is conceded by all respectable and reasonable people. A Nihilist is either a rogue, a madman, or a fool.

Civil government settles disputes, prevents personal retaliations, punishes crimes, puts in fear the vicious elements of society, secures the safety and order necessary to industry and enterprise and thrift, justly distributes the public burdens, enforces reasonable subordinations, unites the resources of the people for public education and other expensive works of general concern, conducts international intercourse and provides for the public defence. In short, it is a blessed substitute for anarchy.

What does anarchy mean, in the present state of human nature? It means all the vicious and criminal classes let loose to a carnival of debauchery, violence, robbery and murder. This at once begets unlimited peril, terror, conflict and retaliation. In the stormy, boiling whirlpool and "madding crowd" all productive industries and thrift and comfort disappear till some strong arm is bared and raised aloft to govern. "God bless that strong arm!" shout

the peoples; "the Reign of Terror is too much for us; thanks for a Napoleon! He is a harbor from an intolerable storm, a heavenly refuge from an earthly hell."

When we are told that this indispensable and world-wide institution came primarily from God, instead of being surprised at the news, and feeling under the necessity of laboriously explaining its consistency with the goodness of an Almighty Ruler, we say that its consistency is as evident as the sun at clear noon—we even say that civil government is an institution which God may well have positively and personally ordained and established, as well as defended and cherished.

And this is what the Bible says he has done. Not only does it show God "setting up one and putting down another" particular ruler at his pleasure, not only does it show him dictating to all rulers the principles on which they must govern, and requiring for them honor and obedience from the people, but it also declares that "the powers that be are ordained of God, and that whosoever resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God." Thus God is not merely a wind that sways the wood at its pleasure, but is also the soil out of which the wood springs and from which it gets all its nourishment.

## 3. NATIONS.

We find mankind broken up into large masses, each under its own civil government. Profane history does not carry us back to the time when it was otherwise.

At first glance, one might think this not to be one of the bright facts of the world. What envies, jealousies, hatreds, bad faiths, wars, wastes of public treasures, are often found in connection with the division of mankind into separate nations! But really, when one comes to think of it, the separation of mankind into nations does not necessarily involve such evils. We can conceive of different governments, as well as different individuals, living quietly side by side in generous fellowship and mutual helpfulness. This has been, and can be again. The evils complained of would not cease if all men were brought under one huge civil government. Are there no jealousies and contests between States of the same republic? no civil wars between Red Roses and White, between Guelphs and Ghibellines, between Cavaliers and Roundheads, between North and South?

Just imagine a single government undertaking to govern all mankind! How impossible for it to adapt itself well to the widely-differing tastes, habits, social and moral conditions of so many different peoples from New England to

Dahomey! How impossible for it even thoroughly to supervise so vast a region! How impossible for it promptly to meet, even if it could keep well aware of, the ever-changing situation and needs of countries twelve thousand miles away from its capital! What multitudes of officials, vast patronage and opportunities for political corruption of all sorts! What a dangerous accumulation of power in the hands of the man or set of men who have at command the resources of some fourteen hundred millions of people! Nor could unity be maintained for any length of time. Like gravity or light, the force of civil government varies inversely as the square of the distance from its source. How much is Constantinople felt among the Koords, or Washington among the frontier hunters of Alaska? Though the centre were quiet, the circumference would be in a state of chronic revolution at the rate of a thousand miles an hour. What centrifugalisms! What breaking off of zones and planets!—for once evolution coming true. The huge, cumbrous machine would shake to pieces by its own motion; the Great Eastern, whose very size makes it unmanageable, would founder in the storm which smaller and snugger crafts easily outride.

As to what would be best for a race ideally

perfect we will not undertake to say. But for such a race as ours is, and always has been, it is plainly better for purposes of civil government that it should be broken up into communities of manageable size. Small farms are most profitable. Armies beyond a certain size cannot be well handled. Many independent freeholds are better for a country than a single mammoth estate. Schools, colleges, and even churches, cannot include over a certain number of persons without becoming unwieldy. We object to having all our American benevolent societies consolidated into one—much more should we object to the consolidation of all the societies of Christendom. It would be like chaining together all the shipping of the world in one fleet and under one captain. “Divide and conquer” is the motto in all such cases. And so it must be in this case of civil government. To secure the best results the one must become many—the great numeral be resolved into factors, if not into terms. In no other way can so vast a field be thoroughly supervised and managed—managed with a due regard to the different characters and interests of different sections. But in this way the peculiarities of all sections may be pleasantly accommodated, while all may live quietly, side by side, on the best terms—a brotherhood of nations.

So the division of mankind into distinct nations, instead of being a curse, is a blessing; as it seems to me, a very great blessing. As such it harmonizes perfectly, not only with the doctrine that a divine Hand is in it (as indeed it is in sin itself), but also with the doctrine that it proceeds *directly* from that Hand—that it exists by the express appointment and sovereign personal action of God. As says the Bible. In the infancy of the race, when it was yet one in place and speech, God by a personal act of sovereignty confounded that one speech into many tongues, that so the unity of mankind might be broken up, and the great river of humanity go forth through the world in many irrigating streams whose freshets banks can restrain and bridges span.

#### 4. LITERATURE, SCIENCE AND ART.

At the present time we find in many lands a vast body of most useful books—books that instruct the ignorant, refresh the weary, spur the sluggish, console the afflicted, guard the tempted, enlarge and discipline at the same time both the intellectual and moral faculties, show what truth and virtue and God are, and incite toward them. They are histories, biographies, poems, epistles, travels, essays, orations, works of imagination, scientific works—falling on us like au-

tumn leaves, and, like them, enriching where they fall. How much we owe to some of these works! How vastly have books of science expanded our horizon, educated the young, empowered our civilization, magnified our conceptions of the Author of nature, and ministered to the reverence and devotion and obedience of good men! This more especially in late years. But in every age, from Moses and Homer and Confucius and the star-gazers of Chaldea downward, on baked bricks or stony monuments, on plates of metal or skin or paper, some measure of the civilizing, refining and elevating influence of literature and science has been felt.

And in our own time these public benefactors have a large family of handmaids and children. Such are the mechanic arts, with their innumerable inventions, which have multiplied, almost beyond comprehension, the safeties, comforts, powers and ornaments of both human and brute life. Such are the fine arts of architecture, sculpture, painting and music. What feasts of sweetness and beauty and grandeur have these spread on golden tables for hungry souls who crave something besides the plain bread of this workaday world!—children as they are of Him who paints the flower and the bird of paradise, chisels the sculptor's models,

sings in winds and oceans, and builds the great dome above us with its pantheons of stellar systems. Between these two forms of art, peasants are now equipped like kings. Those mines on the surface of the earth which we call warehouses and museums are richer than any mines below the surface. You cannot travel a few miles with exploring eyes in such a country as this without finding more triumphs of useful ingenuity, more exquisite treatises on the sublime and beautiful in stone or wood or metal, than tongue can well tell. What thrills and exaltations in the presence of statues and paintings and templed piles and the music that "lifts a mortal to the skies or draws an angel down"! How bare society would be if all that art has done for it should be taken away! It would be like a great house the day after the moving, or like the firmament with all its stars painted out. The colors are wiped off from nature, the hands and feet of the world are cut off, the rich gamut of sounds is leveled to a monotone, and that a humdrum.

Of course, evils are found connected with these blessings. There are bad books, shameful and shameless sculptures and pictures, temples and colisea that ought never to have been built, science that "puffeth up" and blasphemes God, hurtful and even "devilish" inventions.



But these are excrescences—the wens and warts and cancers that sometimes grow on a man. Cannot he be a man without them, and even a truer and completer man? Cannot we go through a conservatory and cast out all the weeds, and still have a beautiful conservatory left—indeed, have it all the truer and brighter for that weeding and outcasting? It is not essential to literature that it be frivolous and corrupting; to science, that it be conceited or materialistic; to art, that it be a prodigal or a wanton. In themselves they are such things as may flourish in heaven itself. Call them the ornaments, if not the necessities, of earth. A man may prostrate others and himself with a loaf of bread. He may strangle himself in a spring as pure and sweet as man ever drank from, or heaven ever saw itself in. But blessed be our bread and water, nevertheless! And blessed be literature and science and art, though sometimes perverted, and even possessed with a devil!

Now, such bright facts do not need to be laboriously shown to be consistent with a good divine Hand being in them. Their consistency is seen at a glance. They are even seen to be such things as the Hand might positively appoint, promote, and even *originate by a direct personal act*, without suggesting a difficulty as

to its goodness, but rather illustrating, emphasizing and proclaiming that goodness.

And this is what the Bible says the Hand does. It not only says that "every good and perfect gift is from above," that "God giveth wisdom," that "if a man lack wisdom let him ask of God," but it gives particular instances of literature, science and art proceeding directly from his sovereign hand; as in the case of Bezaleel and Aholiab, the artists of the tabernacle; of Solomon, who built the temple after the "patterns" given by God to David, and to whom God gave "a wise and understanding heart" in the science of government, not to say in natural history; of Daniel and his companions, to whom God "gave skill in all learning and wisdom;" of the writers of the Old and New Testament, every man of whom "spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost." And in every age the experience of not a few is to the effect that "to have prayed well is to have studied well"—whether as artist or inventor or author or scientist.

##### 5. ENJOYMENTS.

That there are enjoyments which do not deserve the name because of their sinful and, in the end, hurtful character, is plain. But it is equally plain that there are now in the world,

and have been through all the known ages, almost innumerable other enjoyments of a sound, wholesome and most desirable sort—from the merely physical gratification of eating when hungry, drinking when thirsty, resting when weary, up through long shining files to the rapture of a saint just unfolding solar wings for heaven. Think of sportive youth “treading in air,” of health bounding like the steed of the desert, of the joy of harvest, of the pleasures of the imagination, of the delights of knowledge, of the gratifications of taste in connection with the grand and beautiful in nature and art, of thrills of inventors and discoverers, of the profound satisfactions in difficulties overcome, temptations resisted, virtues achieved, useful things unselfishly done, the good name that is better than great riches honorably acquired; think of “sweet peace of conscience, heavenly guest,” the brightness of celestial consolations and hopes, the peace that flows like a river, the “joy unspeakable and full of glory” of the ripest Christian, glorious deathbeds which are triumphal chariots and mounts of transfiguration and ascension! Surely, if the world should lose all such things it would lose more than a purple robe. And they are so many—so very many! Are there any stars in the Galaxy under the broadest of telescopes?

Any light-shafts in the air when the great archer-sun stands in the zenith and empties his quiver?

If we are told that a divine Hand is active in all these sound enjoyments—preparing the way for them, directing their time and other circumstances, warding off enemies, widening and lifting, resisting abuses, always striving to get out of them the greatest possible good—we see nothing in the assertion that looks like calling in question the goodness of God. On the contrary, we can allow that he has *produced* these enjoyments of set purpose and with his own right hand, and yet find in the fact only an illustration and emphasis of his goodness. That he does sometimes directly originate such enjoyments is plain from the fact that men often do as much, and might do it still oftener. Can God do less than man? Do not our consciences, with all their precious “well-dones,” come from his framing hand? And do we not read of the “Comforter,” and of the “joy of the Holy Ghost,” and of the “fruit of the Spirit which is joy”? So it is not always as the first link in a long golden chain of causes that God appears in such passages as the following: “My peace I give unto you;” “God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom and knowledge and joy;” “He giveth songs in the night.”

## 6. VIRTUES AND USEFULNESSES.

We have had to open eyes on depravities and sins and harms as entering largely into the history of the world. But history has a *per contra*. Veins of silver and gold, sometimes wonderfully rich in great nuggets of pure metal and precious stones, run through the dark and flinty ground. Amiabilitys, fortitudes, candors, generositys, pities, mercy, justice, honesty, unselfishness, purity, integrity, conscientiousness, resignation, patience, philanthropy, morality, piety, virtue, magnanimity, holiness—the things which a hundred such words are used to signify—are no poetical fictions, but real existences ever turning up in our observation and reading. Names are often misapplied. All is not gold that glitters. That is often called integrity or virtue which is only an imitation, sorry or otherwise. But none of us doubt that there are almost innumerable examples in actual life of what deserves such a grand name—sometimes most dazzling examples, not only of single virtues, but of clusters of them in the same person; not only of momentary actions, but of long careers of splendid goodness and usefulness. We shade our eyes from the glory. Shall we say, “Hail, Cato the Censor, Scipio the continent, Socrates the

brave lover of truth and hater of shams"? At least we will say, "Hail, Abraham the faithful, Joseph the chaste, Moses the meek, Daniel the incorruptible! Hail, holy prophets and apostles, martyrs and confessors, whose principles were stronger than death! Hail, men in every age who have put on righteousness as a robe and a diadem, saviors of nations, examples to the ages, ornaments of human nature, the bulwarks of public morals, the glory of history—sometimes learned and sometimes ignorant, now robed in serge and now in purple, here great bannered triremes intellectually and there little dories, great calcium-lights of goodness hid away in lowly corners or blazing away from the gilded domes and pinnacles of the world,—all hail!"

Such things are the loveliest and grandest of all beneath the sun—are brighter than the sun itself. All men know it, all candid men confess it. Such heroically righteous lives as some men have lived! They astonish me, they thrill me. I seem to see all the fine arts crystallized into a man. I turn my back on sunrises and sunsets. I turn away from galleries, Uffizis or Pittis, flanked with famous masterpieces, even from that sapphire gallery whose masterpieces are sun and moon and stars,—turn away to gaze absorbedly on something more masterly still, on

some glorious beggar of whom the world is not worthy. Saints of God! Salt of the earth! Lights of the world! Stately ships ploughing through electric seas that glow and flame behind them! Bright rivers streaming away to a golden ocean, and, as they go, enriching the earth and reflecting the glory of the sky! Does any one contradict?

Do such things as these give trouble to one who is trying to justify the ways of God to men? When he is told that God's hand is in them, he says at once, "I can well believe it—can even believe that God ardently desires, deliberately plans for and personally works, such excellent things. They are *so* excellent! so clearly, wholly and superbly excellent! Just what one would have expected from such a Being. They are illustrations of him, and not shadows. They are chords, and not discords. They are spurs to faith, and not repressing bits." And faith quickens as we read that God "creates in men new hearts," that he "works in them to will and do," that all virtues are "fruits of the Spirit," and that we must cry out to him, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

But besides virtues and virtuous careers there have been many useful actions and lives which cannot be called virtuous. Confessedly

bad men sometimes propose measures, start enterprises, perform deeds of great public service. They are statesmen, warriors, scholars, orators and many others of humbler name, who, led mainly by pride and a selfish ambition, have yet become saviors of nations and benefactors of the race. They builded better than they knew. Like Columbus, without design they gave a new world to free institutions and a free religion. History abounds in such useful things, as well as in useful events that flow from other sources than men; such as frosts that put a stop to the pestilence, a storm that purifies the air, a fire that cleans out the city slums and begins a new era of hope and improvement for the devoured Sodom. When religion comes forward to say that there is an overruling providence in these events, we see nothing in them that even seems to object. All that we see is confirmatory. We have a harmony instead of a discord. The facts are *just as if* the doctrine were true. So far as they are concerned, lights instead of shadows are cast on the old-time teaching that "there is a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them as we will."

#### 7. GREAT VICTORIES OF TRUTH AND RIGHT.

I do not know what my readers would call such victories. We might differ somewhat as



to particulars. But we would not differ on this—viz. that in the long stretch of the past there have been many cases in which truth has battled with error, right with wrong, good causes with bad, and at last signally triumphed. To me such triumphs are found in the success of the Greeks over Xerxes, of the Maccabees over the Syrians, of Constantine over Maxentius, of Alfred the Great over the Northmen, of Bruce over the Southrons, of the Netherlands over Spain, of William of Orange over the Romanist Stuarts—in the success of education over illiteracy, of constitutionalism over absolutism, of law over anarchy, of tolerance over intolerance, of the Renaissance over the Dark Ages, of the Copernican astronomy over the Ptolemaic, of Bacon over Aristotle, of civilization over the barricades of Africa, of the Cross over the Crescent, of God over Jupiter and other stones whether rudely or beautifully chiseled; noting especially the wonderful success of Christian missions in the gradual amelioration of life at large.

If you hesitate on some of these examples, put others in their place to your satisfaction, and then join me in saying that the number of such shining victories is not inconsiderable, that they have often been exceedingly brilliant, and that sometimes they have run together as do

contiguous fires, and gloriously streamed away over the world as a broad luminous river with many tributaries; as when Kepler and Bacon and Galileo and Newton joined hands with Columbus and Luther and Erasmus and many another in dissipating mediævalism, and in giving new worlds, above and below, to mankind; and, still more notably, in the case of the later Protestant missions.

One feels like singing the songs of Miriam and Deborah over such victories. Glorious bonfires among the ages, burning up refuse and purifying the air; beacons of warning to the bad and of courage to the good; earth-stars which the sky-stars almost envy, but at last conclude to call brothers,—it is a smooth way for our theism among these. We can admit that a good divine Hand is active in such things to any extent without being at all stumbled. We could even see a positive illustration and proclamation of his goodness were God himself to descend personally into the field of battle, and with his own right hand hew the way to victory. That he sometimes actually does what amounts to this, will be most readily admitted by him who has most fully drank into the spirit of those Scriptures which tell of the Lord who is mighty in battle, who marshals Armageddons, who girds his sword on his thigh,

and rides prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness.

#### 8. RICHLY-DESERVED CALAMITIES.

“And it shall come to pass that the ears of every one that heareth shall tingle.” The calamity was so great. But, while we are startled, our sense of justice is not shocked. The sufferers deserved what they suffered. It was right that such high-handed evil-doers should be made an example of. I mean you, Adam and Eve, driven from the happy garden which you have forfeited by deliberate disobedience. I mean you, antediluvians, who filled the earth with violence and impiety, and then were swept clean away by the unsparing Flood. I mean you, Sodomites, whose vices first smelt to heaven, and then the brimstone smoke of your burning. I mean you, Egypt, enslaving God’s people four hundred years, and then flailed with plagues and buried under the Red Sea. I mean you, Babylon or Nineveh, proud spoiler of the nations with an eye that never pitied, and then given over to spoilers who did to you as you had done to others. I mean you, backsliding Israel, apostatizing to the infinite abominations of the heathen, and then becoming the Lost Tribes. And you, ye Jews, crucifying the Lord of glory, and then scattered and

peeled among all nations. And you, Spain, sickening history with your brutal cruelties in the New World, and then hunted to the meanest place among European nations. And you, ye Neros and Caligulas and Hyder Alis, who sowed the wind and reaped the whirlwind. From the beginning till now hard things have "blurted out" on hard men—not with regularity, as though this world were one of retribution, but as occasional hints that Heaven is not dead nor asleep, as trumpet-blasts sent forward at irregular intervals from the advancing armies of avenging Justice to warn the sinner that they are on their way and will arrive sooner or later. I do not know what would become of this daring, reckless, God-forgetting world if such "alarums" did not sometimes burst out on men in advance of the judgment day. All good men say *Amen* to them. They are fitting things, a salutary lesson, a just rebuke.

Sad as are many things about such judgments, all their shadows point away from God, as do those of all natural objects (Sinai, Gerizim and Calvary included) away from the sun. We can allow that his hand is in them, and even that it is the volcanic mouth from which the chastising lava flows, and yet see in that lava only the fact that God is righteous as well as mighty. In the Old Testament how many

great and sore judgments does he threaten for great and sore guilt! How many actual disasters to nations and individuals are there traced to his sovereign decree chastising for wrong done! How many vials of wrath do the angels of the Apocalypse pour out at his bidding on the guilty nations! In both Old Testament and New how much after this strain: "Thus saith the Lord, I send my four sore judgments on Jerusalem—the sword and the famine and the noisome beast and the pestilence!" Surely, "God distributeth sorrows in his anger." In such passages we almost see the Hand smiting offenders; and as we see we feel bound to say, "Just and true are thy judgments, O Lord." They are precisely what we should have expected from the best of rulers. An objection? Rather an emphasis and illustration of the doctrine that the great Hand that made all is in all.

#### 9. RESPITES OF SINNERS.

But disaster does not always immediately follow sin. Even gross sins—nay, sins that seem superlative and shocking beyond endurance—are generally committed without Heaven making any sign. The earth is just as green, the sky just as blue, and the sinner just as unharmed as ever. And so for long periods. Suns rise and set, month after month glides

quietly away, even years add themselves to years, and yet the scourge does not fall. Some hastily say, "Is there not injustice here?" or, "Does God care?" or, "Is there any God to notice and punish?" And so, "because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil." But yet we all know, when we reflect a moment, that forbearance and patience and long-suffering, so far from being stumbling things, are really after the manner of a good king who has supreme confidence in the stability of his throne and wishes to do his utmost in the way of sparing and reclaiming. It is just what one would expect from a strong and benevolent government. It is a positive illustration of both its goodness and its strength. And so we easily and naturally say, as we notice what respites sinners generally have, "God is waiting to be gracious. He is keeping the door open for an escape. He is 'not slack concerning his promise as men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.'" In short, when we are told that the hand of a merciful King is in these forbearances, that they are a leading feature of his scheme of government, we see nothing to object, but rather see the

facts greeting the doctrine with friendly voice and embracing arms.

#### 10. THE REIGN OF LAW.

This is one of the plainest of facts in the material kingdom. Here, from the orbs of the sky to the grass-blades beneath our feet, everything acts or changes according to fixed modes. We find laws of heat, of light, of chemistry, of health, of solids, of gases—in short, of all that we know in the heavens and earth. It is fashionable not only to allow this, but to insist on it as being one of the most important and grand of facts. In historic matters the reign of law is not so evident; but still it is easy to see that even such matters are largely affected by the orderly brute forces in which they are embosomed; and, when long periods and many individuals are taken into account, laws begin to show themselves, so that Social and Political Science finds a foundation for itself while saying, “The thing that has been is the thing that shall be, and there is nothing new under the sun.”

What a useful fact this is! However well it may be for God occasionally to assert his supremacy over nature and accredit his messages to men by miracles, it would be a general catastrophe if this were to become a haphazard

world, without fixed modes and sequences. Through these alone is science possible. By them alone does experience become a teacher to us. Without them history throws no light on our path, and we are no longer able to stand on the shoulders of other generations and so see farther than they. Were chance suddenly to take the place of law in the universe, it would practically nullify all the accumulations of knowledge during bygone centuries.

The reign of law, therefore, casts lights, and not shadows, in the direction of God and his government. It is a harmony instead of an inconsistency with our theology. We expect from every human government set methods of administration which can be depended on; and we certainly should expect no less from the great Sovereign above, of whom it is written that he makes the dayspring to know its place and the sun to know his going down, appoints the moon for seasons, causes that seed-time and harvest shall not fail, sets bars and doors to the deep, establishes the ordinances of heaven and all the ends of the earth. We have a verisimilitude and illustration of the divine goodness instead of a denial or suspicion.

Our enumeration of bright facts might be carried much farther. That the system of



things in which we live is largely mysterious to such beings as ourselves; that in some way the main religious ideas have been conserved all over the world in all ages; that there are great scope and demand for faith in God among men; that sin and error are allowed to show out, to some extent, their nature by their fruits; that the world is made a thorny one for sinners; that, while respite and forbearance are the rule with men, there are occasional outbursts of judgment on signal offenders; that even the good find life disciplinary, suffer more or less from the follies and sins of the bad, and so have a personal interest in promoting public intelligence and virtue; that sin is largely overruled for good; that there are in the world grand opportunities for cultivating patience, courage, fortitude, sympathy, helpfulness and many good and noble traits; that light and other advantages are apt to be withdrawn on abuse; that God hides himself from the wicked and reveals himself more and more to the good,—I say, that great numbers of such reasonable and useful facts are just what we should look for in a scheme of things through all parts of which sways and works a divine Hand. And they are what we actually find. Do they frown on our doctrine? Nay, they look toward it with friendly and even affectionate eyes.

Whatever may be thought of some noisome inorganic substances (certainly no more noisome than sin), such useful things as water, air and light accord perfectly with the idea of a good God who cherishes, and even made, them. Whatever may be thought of some noxious plants (certainly no more noxious than sin), such useful things as grass and flowers and fruits and grains and forests are just what one would expect a good divine Power to foster, and even make. Whatever may be thought of some venomous animals (certainly no more venomous than sin), such things as the more useful domestic animals and many birds of wondrous beauty or song are certainly the very opposite of objections to the idea that a good God is to them both a Providence and a Maker. Whatever may be thought of sin and its related evils (certainly not *irreconcilables*), such things as happiness, virtue, truth, the great ethnic institutions which furnish these a congenial stronghold, the brilliant victories won in the name of science, humanity or God,—I say, these are what, *a priori*, we should suppose would find active support, if not origin, in a benevolent divine Hand. They are just the children to come from such a parent, just the music to sound from such lips, just the rays to shoot from such a sun.

VI.

ILLUSTRATION BY GREAT EXAMPLES.

PART THIRD.



## VI.

### ILLUSTRATION BY GREAT EXAMPLES.

#### PART THIRD.

#### GREAT FACTS POSITIVELY DEMANDING.

**T**O complete our argument we need to illustrate the following proposition :

#### III. NOT A FEW FACTS POSITIVELY DEMAND THE PRESENCE IN THEM OF A DIVINE HAND.

Under this head it is proposed to cite only such facts as can be shown to be of signal greatness on their own account, as well as on account of the great Hand that is in them. Such facts quicken interest, impress the memory, arouse and empower the thought as less striking facts cannot. They seem specially worthy of a divine interposition. They trend toward the supernatural, naturally invite our faith in that direction, and, in some cases, almost contain an incipient promise that if we look for a divine Hand we shall find it. And, if it is found, they do for it what a rich frame does for a great painting, or a choice setting

does for a precious jewel. Accordingly, I ask particular attention to the greatness of the facts now to be cited.

### I. MATTER.

What is that ultimate material of which the earth is composed? Let him answer who can. The profoundest and acutest minds have now for ages been straining away at the question, and yet the solution seems as far off as ever. Matter is still a great mystery. And yet we know some striking things about it.

The last atoms composing any given bit of matter are almost infinitely small. Neither our eyes nor our instruments can discern them. The smallest bit of dust that we can take up on the point of a knife, or indeed can see by a microscope magnifying two hundred and fifty thousand times, is almost a world to one of its last particles. A grain of musk will give a sensible odor through a room for twenty years. This it does by filling the air with its particles, but so inconceivably small are these that if the musk is weighed at the end of the twenty years no loss of weight can be noticed. A grain of copper dissolved in nitric acid will give a blue color to three pints of water. Each atom of the water must have something of the copper, which is thus separated into no less than one

hundred million parts. Eight ounces of spider-web would go round the earth about a thousand times—that is, would stretch twenty-four millions of miles.

Such are the atoms! And yet they are heaped together in such numbers as to make the great earth. How many of them are there in a globe eight thousand miles through? “As the sand on the sea-shore innumerable” is a strong comparison, but right in its neighborhood lies the material for another wonderfully stronger.

There are, according to present knowledge, some sixty different sorts of these infinitely small particles. They must differ from each other as widely in qualities as do the widely-different substances they compose. Each of them is a crystal, having a symmetrical form peculiar to itself. Each of them has solved for itself the problem of perpetual motion, being in a state of continual transfer from one object to another, sometimes at the rate of more than one hundred and eighty thousand miles a second, and some scientists say eight million times this figure.

Think of the marvels of chemical affinities; of the stupendous velocities and mechanical forces that belong to what we call heat, light, electricity; of the profound mystery of these

things, whether they be considered elemental matter or only states of such matter; of that astounding property of gravity in virtue of which each atom attracts at the same instant every other atom, however remote, through the whole universe—acts where it is not, acts at infinite distances from itself, acts on an infinite number of things at the same moment. Undoubtedly, the atoms are the last hiding-places of that great mystery which we call *physical force*. They are the fountains and seeds, the fathers and mothers, of those great dynamics that sometimes shake the world.

Now, heathen philosophers have largely supposed matter to be eternal. In this respect, as in many others, they are followed by atheists of the present day. But believers in God and the Scriptures are one in the opinion that matter was strictly *created*—made out of nothing.

The statements of the Bible in regard to the power of the Almighty are so intense and broad, and even scornful of limitations; so mighty an exception would have to be made to the "*all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made,*" if we must except the whole infinite kingdom of material substance with its various elements, properties, forces and natural combinations; the power to create matter differs so little, if at all,



as regards difficulty of conception, from other attributes freely ascribed to God in his word, such as self-existence, intuitive knowledge of all things, incessant and eternal vigilance and action without weariness, power to accomplish the grandest results instantaneously at any distance simply by willing, power to make souls—whether viewed as being in their very nature thinking, feeling, willing, moral substances, or as substances to which these qualities have been given by organization or otherwise;—in a word, the drift of revelation is such as to carry all unresisting minds into the presence of a CREATOR. Especially after they have been set forward by such a special current as this: *“The things that are seen were not made of things that do appear.”*

So, once the regions of space, now occupied by the worlds, were wholly vacant of them. Suddenly the vacancy became occupied by such earthy substances as we see around us. Out of the black waters of pure zero flashed the oxygen, the nitrogen, the hydrogen, the carbon and whatever other elements enter into the ultimate substratum of material nature—whether that just at hand in our own planet or yonder in the fires of the sun, or still yonder in the far-away stars seen only by the great eye of the largest telescope, or not seen at all by man.

Whence that wondrous birth? Things do not make themselves, save in the philosophy of babyhood. On our own plane we find no force that even suggests the possibility of producing something out of nothing. It is only when we look up, far up, until at last our wearied and dazzled sight reaches the utmost summit of being, and Him to whom "all things are possible," that we reach our answer. Behold the Creator! Here is One who is not merely an infinitely enlarged man, differing from us only in degree, but One whose nature differs from ours in *kind*—possessing that most incomprehensible though credible faculty of doing all things without means of doing, as well as of knowing all things without means of knowing.

"*Ex nihilo nihil fit*" is a mistake. There is a better as well as an older maxim to substitute for it, which we beg leave to commend to the notice of "philosophers"—viz.: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." When that beginning was we cannot tell. We cannot tell whether it was at one time or at many times. For aught we know, creation may have been taking place at intervals all along a past eternity—may be taking place still. Why could not the power that calls matter from nothing insert at any moment

new masses of matter among the old, so as not to destroy the equilibrium of the system, only readjusting it? Certainly, this we know, that whenever creation has occurred it has been by divine power. Also, the time or times of the event, the places in boundless space where it took place, the various sorts of matter made and their proportion to each other, must have been fixed upon by the divine Will.

## 2. A HABITABLE GLOBE.

The material elements which God created came together into a habitable earth. At first no such forms of organic life as we now see could exist among them—especially as, Geology being witness, they were all mingled in one great fiery ocean convulsed with such terrible storms as are now never seen. But gradually they came together in such ways that vegetables, brute animals, and at last men, could not only live on the earth, but flourish. Especially, large and striking provision slowly gathered for man.

He would need air, water, dry land; and somehow these separated out of the original chaos of elements. He would need stores of metals, medicines, marbles, oils and many other substances for his trades and arts; somehow these came to be stored away in the bowels of

the earth. He would need to have the primitive rocks broken down into fertile soils; and somehow a large part of the earth's crust was ground into atoms. He would need a great variety of vegetable products for food, fuel, clothing, building, beauty; somehow the ground came into that state that it could take on robes of grass and flowers and grains and fruits and forests. He would need various brutes for food, service, knowledge; somehow suitable conditions for them appeared in the air, in the waters, on the dry land.

He would need a broken surface to give wide outlooks, to diversify and beautify the landscape, to give motion and purity to water and air, to make accessible the rich mineral deposits; somehow the strata were broken and tilted and lifted into hills and mountains, from which rivers and rivulets innumerable were running their fruitful and forceful courses to the sea. He would need the alternations of day and night to meet the alternate demands in his constitution for labor and rest, as well as to enlarge his outlook on the creation; somehow the earth took to moving on an axis. He would need a variety of seasons to give a grateful and healthful change to his occupation and experiences; somehow the earth came to revolve about the sun at a suitable distance and

speed and with an axis suitably inclined to its plane of revolution. He would need certain bounds for the winds, rains, snows, heats, colds; somehow such general limitations were found checking the great natural forces in the interest of human safety.

In short, he would need the raw materials out of which to make the highest condition of humanity yet seen, with all its comforts, conveniences and powers; and, somehow, were stored away, as if for him, all the brute forces, harness, cars and tramways by which to bring in the nineteenth century with its trades, commerce, inventions and discoveries, arts and sciences, educations, temples, cities, wonders.

Now, here is a series of historical events extending over vast periods of time and making an immense procession of adaptations and preparations for the organic races, of which we have instanced only a few broad classes. The only two explanations that would be offered at the present day are—(1) the theory of natural development, which makes the organic races the natural outcome of earlier constructions with their environments, and so in harmony with them; and (2) the theory of a direct divine purpose and action for securing these preparations.

I have endeavored to show elsewhere that

matter in an elementary state is not able, *of itself*, in process of time however long, to come together into all that wide variety of complex substances and arrangements actually found in habitable globes. Otherwise, the actual heavens and earth could not properly be appealed to in proof of God—as is done in the Scriptures and as has been done by natural religion from time immemorial—because in that case we have already a sufficient explanation of them in existing material causes which may be eternal.

Besides, historical Genesis shows us the Spirit of God acting amid the primitive chaos of elements and bringing them into order and preparation for organic life on this earth. A part of this preparation may have been sudden; a part of it we know from geology to have been very gradual. But, whether sudden or gradual, something more than the forces and laws of matter was concerned in producing the wonderful constructions of the material theatre we occupy. The supernatural was active. “The worlds were framed by the word of God;” he “built all things.” This is the only scriptural or sufficient philosophy of the architectural heavens and earth.

Supposing that God intended to stock the earth with organic races, he would provide for them, as far as possible, a suitable environment.

This is only after the manner of every wise builder. Who does not aim to have the surroundings of the house he is about to build in harmony with it?

Notice yonder man, whom I happen to know. He has large resources, has decided on the plan and site of his mansion, and, while the materials and agents are being gathered, is busied in dealing with the grounds. He grades them. He drains them. He draws out rocks and gathers off surface-stones. He sets out trees and vines. He makes a garden here, a well there, a road yonder. He provides for prospects, for health, for convenience, for beauty. He is a landscape-gardener—all with reference to the structure that is in due time to arise—so that everything about it may make with it a harmonious whole. And, from what I know of the man's taste and judgment and resources of every kind, I am sure that, when his great mansion is finished and stands in its place amid the circumstances provided for it, the whole will seem one delightfully self-congruous picture—a chime of bells, the different parts of the same tune, the petals of the same flower, the complementary colors of the same white light—even such a unit of construction that, one part being given, every other can be inferred from it.

“Thus saith the Lord that created the heavens, God himself that formed the earth and made it—he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited.” There is but One who can ask, “Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the earth?” but One to whom we can say, “As for the world and the fullness thereof, thou hast founded them.”

Are not these inanimate constructions by which the earth is made habitable such as to tax heavily our powers of astonishment? The atoms have come together into a palace.

If one could journey outward from the centre of the earth, what a long train of marvels he would see! The whole core one huge conflagration, tossing in inconceivable heat and flame—flashing, billowing, roaring, as never did surface-fires; so hot that in it all substances, even the most refractory in human crucible, exist only as gases or as incandescent gases solidified; mysteriously burning on from age to age with no supplies of fuel from without; a perpetual, self-feeding furnace that helps warm the surface of the earth, but is kept from burning it by the interposed rocky crust through which it finds occasional vent and voice in boiling springs, volcanoes and earthquakes. Moving upward, we pass through what are



really successive chapters of a stone book in which the eye of science reads the history of untold ages of change and preparation—passing gradually from a universal ocean of fire to a universal ocean of water; and from this to islands and continents long since buried, and where reigned with alternate sway profound quiet and awful convulsion, torrid and glacial climates, and where slowly gathered (or rapidly) the wonders of crystallization; vast stores of the precious and useful metals; rainbow-gems fit for kings; beds of coal and salt and marl and medicine and marble; caverns where our torches beam on the weird architectures of subterranean temples; a system of underground streams and rivers as vast and useful as that above ground, so that if we sink a shaft almost anywhere we come, sooner or later, to abundant water. At last we come out on the surface to see mountains whose tops we cannot see, ranges of them that stretch across continents; great lakes and seas gilded with sunlight and silvered with moonlight; Amazons that sweep majestically thousands of miles to oceans still more majestic, and whose sublime bass fills the earth; Niagaras of rapids and cataracts,—all buried profoundly in a universal ocean of air in whose pellucid depths swim architectural clouds and snow-crystals and gra-

cious rains and the pomp of sunsets, rainbows and auroras, and where rush the storms, flash the lightnings and volley the thunders,—all varied by the shifting glories of day and night and of the revolving seasons. All through our journey we have fallen in with dynamites of force, either chained in rocky cells (or, still more securely, in some chemical union) or ranging abroad with stormy brow and earth-quaking tread, but yet in these days somehow kept within such bounds as the general safety of a habitable world requires, so that colds and heats and rains and winds and lightnings are all under bonds not to pass certain limits of violence. All through our journey, though it led under the Arctic Circle, we have only to smite the coldest stone, the frostiest air, or the iceberg itself, to find that magazines of heat are mysteriously stored away in the depths of all things—enough, if brought out, to wrap the world in flames. What a wonderful variety of composite substances we have encountered, from that grand *mélange* of glowing gases in the great central crucible, with their vociferous unions and disunions, up through the dense subterranean storehouses of the mineral world to and around and above the globed surface; and all this vast variety made up mainly of only some sixteen elements variously com-

pounded according to the doctrine of definite proportion! How many results by how few means! What signal uses have already been found in them! how many new ones are being found almost daily!—suggesting untold wealth of use still lying behind in the shadow, and clamorous to be discovered.

One man devotes the labor of a lifetime to the science of crystals, another still to some other small fraction of the furniture of this habitable world. Does either lack enough to do as the years go by? He hardly makes a *beginning* on the wonders of his field, which is merely one item of furniture in a palace twenty-four thousand miles in circuit.

### 3. LOWER ORGANISMS.

By these I mean vegetables, and brute animals.

Nothing but wonderful folly would deny these to be wonderful things. What man can make the like? As a rule, the better informed one is in regard to them the more wonder-smitten he is. Especially if he has studied through the lenses of a first-class microscope.

For the intimate structure of plants and animals I must ask you to look at easily-obtainable plates which picture specimens as they appear under the best instruments. They show only

a few parts of objects all of whose parts are almost equally curious and elaborate. The mystery of a single leaf, or a reticulated spider's eye, is quite beyond the probing of the profoundest philosopher. Till used to it he lifts up both hands in astonishment. If I could condense all the anatomical details of recent botanists and zoologists into a single picture, speaking with all the colors of life to a single glance of the eye, ah, what a glory of structural workmanship would confound you!

Now, work out a problem of infinite variations on these specimen structures, yet so that they shall always remain beautifully adapted to their place in nature. Do this out of scarcely more than four sorts of chemical elements. Then multiply these varieties by all the numbers that can be got out of the multiplication table by an expert, and sow these broadcast, as from an inexhaustible granary, through the immensities of air and sea and land till they everywhere almost touch each other.

“Full nature swarms with life; one wondrous mass  
Of animals, or atoms organized,  
Waiting the vital breath when parent Heaven  
Shall bid his Spirit blow. The hoary fen,  
In putrid streams, emits the living cloud  
Of pestilence. Through subterranean cells,  
Where searching sunbeams scarce can find a way,  
Earth animated heaves; and where the pool

Stands mantled o'er with green, invisible,  
 Amid the floating verdure, millions stray.  
 Each liquid too, whether it pierces, soothes,  
 Inflames, refreshes or exalts the taste,  
 With various forms abounds. Nor is the stream  
 Of purest crystal, nor the lucid air,  
 Though one transparent vacancy it seems,  
 Void of their unseen people."

Paint and proportion multitudes of these till they glow with beauty—from the green blade or leaf to the Victoria Regia, from the sculptured iridescent shell-fish to the bird of paradise—and so dispose numbers of them as to glorify such landscapes as tourists go half round the world to see. Swell some of them till they rise more than three hundred feet into the air, as the giant trees of the Yosemite, or as the leviathans of the deep make it to "boil like a pot;" dwarf countless others, yet without subtracting a single vessel or pore or function, till they pass out of sight of the sharpest-sighted instrument that optician ever made; fit the parts of each so mathematically to each other that when one finds a leaf or bone, however small, he can infer the whole plant or animal from it. Then fit them all, from the greatest to the least, with that wonder which, in our ignorance, we call *life*. Nay, at least in some cases, give this life in advance of organization. And, perhaps greatest wonder of all, let all

these wonders come from little seeds or eggs sometimes microscopic, sometimes thousands of years old, always plain and unorganized to all appearance under the best glasses. Does each of these unpromising eggs or seeds contain in itself an infinitesimal organic unit or mould as perfect and peculiar as that which comes from it, though no science nor art of ours can find it?

But the animal tribes have some marvels of a higher order than those common to them and plants. Their life is of a nobler and more mysterious sort. They have the rudiments of a spiritual nature. They furnish wonderful examples of speed, strength, courage and acuteness of senses. The common butterfly has thirty-five thousand eyes in one. Some birds are the sweetest of songsters. Worms change to butterflies, and fishes to frogs. Some animals are headless, and others have, or can have, many heads. Some can be turned inside out and then thrive just as well as ever—can indeed be cut into bits which shortly become as many complete animals; or these bits may be pieced together in any way and grow into a living monster of any form you please. Some can thrive in enormous heats, others in enormous colds, others still under almost infinite tons of pressure and in eternal night, still

others with enormously long deprivation of food. Little polypi, working as if possessed by one will, build up great coral reefs and islands out of the ocean depths, and great mineral beds are made up of the stony remains of infusoria five hundred millions of which are sometimes found in a single drop of water, and forty-one thousand millions of whose skeletons only fill a cubic inch,—every one of which had mouth, teeth, muscles, glands, eyes and all the organs of sense after the manner of the larger animals.

In all this immense population of fauna and flora what a world of uses—for decoration, food, labor, pleasure, education; for shade, medicine, fuel, furniture, instruments and structures of all sorts! Wonderful servants of that wonderfully furnished palace which we call the earth!

If mere atoms with their forces and laws cannot account for habitable globes, and especially for such systems of them as science has discovered, much less can they account for endless species of plants and animals, all of which are geologically known to have had a beginning, and which, all things considered, are at least as wonderful as any astronomic system. In the Scriptures these earthly organisms are freely appealed to as conclusive proof of the divine wisdom and power; which they certainly are

not if existing natural forces and laws are enough for their production. Are we prepared to abandon the Newtonian method of philosophizing?

Further, the first chapter in Genesis, naturally interpreted, shows us God as personally introducing the various flora and fauna of our world to their home. Has science discovered anything opposed to this view? On the contrary, it is the most reasonable and philosophical explanation of the origin of species; because it is the simplest, the clearest, the safest, the most salutary, as well as the most consonant with the natural thought and traditions of mankind.

So every new species that appeared along the geologic ages was a divine construction. Especially did every animal form that included a choosing, feeling and intelligent nature, of whatever grade, also include a divine creation, or at least organization. As the number of different organic species known to us is practically infinite, there has been in the long course of the past a practically infinite number of consummate divine actions. They make the present, as well as the past, a glorious overflowing granary of stars. Just as stars, millions of them—wonders all of them—come out one after another quietly on the sky and pierce the gloom in every direction with their shining arrows, so



all through the dim geologic evening of the world were ever appearing new species which no preceding species could account for, any more than the earlier stars of the evening can account for those which appear later; and the only sufficient philosophy of which is: "Hath not My hand made all these things?"

Of course the same divine sovereignty that began species fixed the times and places in which they appeared.

#### 4. MAN.

The simplest vegetable is a wonder. Placed under the microscope, and studied as far toward the first elements of structure as our best science can carry us, it seems full of a mysterious wisdom. From this, upward to the most complex and colossal forms of our flora, the whole immense interval is deluged with an endless variety of organisms. We are astounded; we are even at times overwhelmed and discouraged. The lifetime of generations and the utmost resources of our art only suffice just to place us within the doors of that great forest sanctuary whose every leaf worships God as its Author. "For the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew."

But these are only parts of his ways—the lower parts. Our observation still keeps on its ascending way till it comes out on the plane of animal life. Where is the horizon? Where is vacancy? The dust beneath our feet is fairly alive with miracle-beings. The air swarms and sings with every imaginable sort of winged creatures. The water, from the tiniest streamlet and pool to the mightiest ocean, is as populous with various finny tribes, from motes to monsters. Ranging over the land, on mountains and in valleys, in meadows and forests, in tropics and arctics, are flocks and herds in numbers and varieties that defy statement; from the hugest *Deinothere* that shakes the plain with his tramp and roar to the humblest spider that creeps and spins. These stand as much above vegetable organisms, wonderful as they are, as these latter do above the highest mineral compounds; and in their innumerable hosts they represent to us those primitive species which long ago, and (as the earth-records show) at successive periods, made their appearance on the earth—not by a fortuitous concourse of atoms or creation by law, but by the might and wisdom of Him “without whom was not anything made that was made.” “And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air.”

Then came a higher epiphany. After the advent of all the other organic types appeared man. On some bright day, millenniums back, the brute world and the gazing stars became aware of a new wonder among them that outshone them all. An upright form, a majestic brow, eyes that gleamed with thought and empire, lips that could speak, as well as ears that could hear, the words of God,—behold, at last, the king of the world!

Let us set this advent apart from that of the lower organisms, for the same reason that the Bible seems to do it—viz. its special dignity and consequence. It is plain that there is “a great gulf fixed” between man and every other terrestrial species—not so much as to his wonders of bodily organization, for it is by no means certain that in this respect he has much the advantage of many other animals that might be named, but as to his spiritual and moral powers. In these he towers almost infinitely above all other terrestrial beings. He is the image of God.

Were I called on to picture the present state of human nature, I would point to the ruins of a city that once shone with the glories of empire. Here are dismantled walls. Here is the rubbish of dwellings. Here rank weeds wave over highways and crumbling foundations.

Here creeps the reptile, roams the wild beast and prowls the outlaw.

But it is not all a desolation. As the traveler threads the deserted streets he is awed by the grand remains which gaze mournfully on him from every hand. In these broken marbles he sees traces of vast and beautiful structures through which moved the great, the splendid and the lovely. Here rises a column as erect and fair as when it helped to sustain a palace. There stands a palace as entire almost as when princes dwelt in it. Yonder appears a temple so massive, so stately, so noble of material and workmanship, that the eye never wearies with gazing on it. And, scattered all about, are relics of other days, profuse and magnificent enough to awaken visions of a metropolis whose proud name was Palmyra or Thebes or Rome.

No doubt the human nature we see is human nature in ruins. Our moral being is prostrate. Its fall has carried with it, to a very considerable extent, the beauty and power of our intellectual, and even of our physical, being. We do not know as we should know if we had never sinned. We are not as fair, strong and healthful as we should be if the curse of the soul had not passed over to the body. Yes, it is a sad ruin which sins have made of us—sins, those worst of Goths and Vandals—and yet, like old

Rome or Egyptian Thebes, it is a ruin of most majestic aspect. Enough remains to make humanity one of the grandest things beneath the heavens. Columns wondrously chiseled still stand upright and shining within us. Halls fit for sovereigns still stretch within us their long-drawn magnificence. Within us may be found shrines needing only a true fire on their altars and the sanctity of a true worship to make them outshine all outward temples. No old-time city, in the gloomy pomp of its partial desolation, so awes the mind accustomed to think deeply as do the great remains of its own shattered powers. Let others wonder as they may that the Scriptures make men the objects of such high interests and strivings on the part of the Highest, it is no wonder to me. I see enough in men, ruined as they are, to make it worth the while of Him who inhabits eternity and calls the universe of astronomy his own, to bend on them the whole of the care, the longing and the effort ascribed to him by the Christian religion.

Go with me to yonder library. What book is this? It is the work of a bard who swayed the pictured wings of angels, whose voice has tuned every Christian language, at the sound of whose mighty harp generation after generation have hushed their hearts to listen.—What book is

this? It is the work of a philosopher by whose name knowledge is wont to swear; whom science counts her master of magicians; the coronet of whose fame is graced by so many gems of discovery as all the ages before him had failed to gather; who created the most profound of the sciences in the effort to improve another science; who taught us to climb to the height of the stars and weigh them as in balances, and girdle them with measuring-line, and make up the log of their stupendous voyages, and tell the precise arrangements of the system of worlds to which we belong at any given moment of the future or past.—What book is this? It is the life of one who rose from obscurity to a throne and from a throne to a kingdom of thrones, but whose place was never greater than his faculty; who never was more ambitious and selfish, never more famous and powerful, than his genius was sublime; whose sovereign glance went promptly down into the depths of human nature; who grasped almost as by intuition the great principles of government and warfare, and strode through the cabinets and battlefields of Europe with a science and ease that never found their equal; who fought and legislated, diplomatized and financiered, with the same triumphant ability; and who, when he fell, fell not so much by the skill

and powers of man as by the icy rigors of the Almighty.

And now let us turn from these alcoves, in which the lips and deeds of mighty men are still eloquent, and place ourselves in the cathedral of Rome as it now is, or in the Senate-house and Forum of Rome as it was in the days of M. Tullius Cicero, or on the Pnyx of Athens in the days of Demosthenes, or in some national Patent Office where all the great inventions of the age are brought together. The church of St. Peter! What multitudes have looked, as we are now doing, along the height and outspread of these proportions, and, like us, felt themselves almost overborne in the presence of the speaking masonry! Ah, the blended richness of painting, sculpture and architecture; of the artful light, the exquisite carving, the graceful arches, the massive strength, the faultless symmetry and the vast spaces of this wondrous temple which human genius planned and wrought! Religion, in the majesty of her heavenly form, seems to come and lay her solemn shadow on us, and silently and slowly lift her finger toward the eternal God.

This hall of the Conscript Fathers! Now the patricians must indeed take care that the republic receive no detriment. The consul is

already doing it. He is exposing to them the conspiracy of Catiline as never was conspiracy exposed before. Listen! See with what high art he introduces his dangerous subject. See how, as he proceeds, he is fastening to himself as with hooks of steel the attention and sympathies of his hearers! Now he is beginning to thrill them by the electricity of his kindling argument. The stream of his power widens and deepens and grows more rapid and phosphorescent every moment. See, now, how it sparkles and flashes beneath the lightnings of his wrathful patriotism and fancy! At last, swollen to a shining river, it hurries along the whole assembly on its impetuous bosom as if they were mere bubbles of its own foaming waters. See how they hang on his wonderful lips, are convinced when he is convinced, glow when he glows, scorn when he scorns, rage when he rages! How evidently they have become in his hand a keen two-edged sword driving with thirsty point at the infamous conspirators! Catiline trembles. He attempts to reply. Murmurs rise on every hand; they swell gradually into a tempest; and grave senators, despite dignity and usage, spring to their feet and ring in his ears the cry of *Incendiary! Parricide!* He rushes in terror from the Senate-house and the city.



These are but ancient specimens of powers which are being freely reproduced in our own day. We have orators as eloquent, poets as soaring, architects as gifted, as any in the past. *Circumspice*, as says the monument of Sir Christopher Wren. Antiquity gives a certain beauty and grandeur of its own to persons, structures, achievements. Apotheosis is not to be had till long after death and burial. That old temple is really no grander in its design and execution than this which was finished yesterday; only it *looks* so, as seen through the haze of a thousand years. That scientist, long since laid away in Westminster Abbey, did not command in his own day such reverence as he does now: and, it may be, was not a whit abler than many a present scientist who lacks his splendid opportunity, or who has chanced to turn his studies on less fruitful fields, or has focused his genius on those great inventions or institutions or business operations which distinguish our time. How marvelous some inventions are! The contemporaries of Homer, or Demosthenes, or Cicero, or Angelo, or even Newton, would have wondered far more at some of our -graphs and -phones and factories than they ever did at any of the achievements which they actually saw. I have no wish to rehearse the much-rehearsed story of the exploits of inventive genius in our

times. I simply echo what everybody is saying: *It is wonderful!*

Such is the human intellect in its broken state. Not that we are all the peers of such great men as I have named, in the present *degree* of our faculty; but we may well lay claim to natures of the same general order, and natures which, in a few years, will have reached the same grand intellectual expansion.

Now turn from the intellect of man to his *will*. We here find a greatness fully equal to any found in his intellectual nature. The energy and persistence of purpose which some men show are about as impressive as anything to be seen in the world. Glance at the career of almost any man who from obscurity has raised himself to a great place and name. That scholar whose name is on every lip and whose works will make him live immortally when dead,—how happens he to stand on the pinnacle where we see him? Is it due to some stroke of good luck, or to some sudden uplift of incomparable natural talent? Nothing of the sort. In early life he set his mark before him, kept it there despite great temptations to discouragement, pressed toward it when weary and sick and neglected—pressed toward it when men and even divine Providence seemed to say, *Thou shalt not*. It was his unconquerable resolution, maintained with stern

and splendid erectness, despite gravities and storms, through many years of struggle, which finally carried him through to his high place.

How imposing the constancy and fire of determination with which men of business sometimes work out through years and years their plans of accumulation—imposing in spite of the manifest infatuation of a governing purpose that centres altogether on this brief life! And how much more imposing the steady inflexibility with which the good man sometimes takes up his cross and does the work of unpopular reform, sets himself against corrupt public opinion, heroically battles all his life long through contempt and abuse, or, calmly untwining from his neck the clinging arms of dear ones, puts oceans between himself and them and wears life away in missionary-work among savages beneath the Arctic Circle or the fiery zones of the Equator, and at last lies down uncomplainingly to die, with no country but heaven and no friend but God! Fix your thought on the glorious resolves of a Paul; and, indeed, of a host of martyrs who have pressed with a like unwavering decision along their thorny and bloody way toward the mark for the prize of their high calling.

Surely this human will has still left in it something too sublime to be easily spoken. Can we

look at such examples without feeling that something of divinity still lingers among men? True it is that the will does not display itself in these imposing forms in each of us; but, in each, precisely the same forms lie folded up, ready to be spread abroad like banners by suitable pains. How glorious are even the ruins of the human will!

Also, we shall find on examination that our *emotional* nature, much as sin has injured it, is still full of great things, if not of good things. Here we may find desires which the whole world cannot satisfy. Throw in at their open mouths planets, suns, starry systems of natural good, and they would remain open for more. Here we may find hope quenchless by trouble. Here, too, we may find a fear immense as any hope—a fear fearful to see as well as to feel; the pale and haggard fear that screams in dreams, tries to struggle away from a horrible death, begs to escape the endless perdition of the ungodly; the terrible fear that sometimes rends the hearts of men when they are consciously dying in their sins. Do we not know, too, of human love that is stronger than death, which many waters cannot quench nor floods drown? Have we not known it to cling to its object not only when it was disgrace and ruin to do so, but when abused and ruined by the

very object to which it clung? And within our strange heart, also, we may find a hatred as huge as any love—a hatred fearful to see as well as to feel, one that would gladly pluck down eternal retributions on its object. “Go to hell,” says many a wretch; and he means it. An Italian one day found his enemy in his power. The dagger was lifted: “I will spare your life if you will abjure the religion of Jesus Christ.” The wretch abjured. “Now,” exclaimed the triumphant hater as he drove his weapon home to the heart, “I have a sweet revenge, for I kill both body and soul.” Within each human heart what wondrous capacities for happiness and misery! We have a thousand sources of either where the brutes have one: in this world we may “rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” or suffer with unspeakable distress; in the next world no limits can be set to the heights of bliss to which we shall rise, or to the depths of anguish to which we shall descend.

Surely this is a great and awful nature of ours, though it be in ruins. Though we do not all now have such *degrees* of hope and fear, of love and hatred, of joy and sorrow, as have been instanced, yet their elements lie folded up within us all, and can, like the furled canvas of the ship or of the aëronaut, be expanded by

circumstances into great billowy clouds and globes.

There are powers wrapped up in man of which we only get glimpses on extraordinary occasions. For example, at the point of drowning men sometimes find their memories sweeping back over their entire past and seemingly gathering into one view on the instant all the actions of their lives. It is the judgment day condensed into a moment. The Book of Remembrance, brought down to date, flashes out to them its every entry. The somnambule will rise from his bed and solve problems which baffled his best waking hours—will, with closed eyes, walk safely through the midnight on dizzy ridges and parapets where he would not venture in the waking day. He has, somehow, a faculty of seeing that is independent of bodily eyes. Think also of that strange world of facts, as well as of fictions, glimpses of which we get in Mesmerism and Spiritualism. Whatever doubt, and even denial, belongs to many of their wonders, it hardly can be reasonably doubted that they hint at powers in the human soul of the most astonishing sort.

Notwithstanding the heavy blow which sin has given to the human soul, it has left it a free moral nature. The power of self-government in respect to right and wrong still re-

mains. No matter how mighty the temptations to wrong, we can trample on them; and no matter how mighty the motives to righteousness, we can trample on *them*. A nature thus self-governed like God's own, a nature that can conquer all its circumstances, a nature which, however it does, can choose and do the right despite the utmost efforts of earth and hell, is, deny it who can, a noble structure. It is the pillar which stands as lofty and beautiful among the broken marbles of Persepolis as when it helped to support a temple.

One of the most striking features of humanity is its power of indefinite enlargement. There are no limits which can be assigned to the extent of our knowledge, to the firmness and force of our purposes or to the range and depth of our emotions. We shall never have a virtue or a sin which cannot be greater, at least in intensity. Look down the endless future till your eye aches with straining after the ultimate, and you can discover nothing which would necessarily prove to the soul the Pillars of Hercules. Yes, we can become wiser and stronger and better for ever if it be so that God has granted us a for ever to improve in. And, on the other hand, if God has granted us a for ever, we can, in respect to many things, ever grow worse. Beyond

any assignable limit we may increase our depravity—deprave our reason as a guide to truth; weaken our wills for every useful pursuit and the ease with which useful emotions are excited and maintained. Such is the glorious and awful nature that still remains to man. We are forced to admire and tremble at the same moment.

That everlasting duration, along which our natures are fitted to improve or decline, actually belongs to them. The majesty of an immortality is upon us. Sin, with all its power to curse and crush, has not been able to lay in ruins this feature of our likeness to God. Nay, it has never been able to weaken it in the least. It is as solid and rooted and august as that around which Paradise first bloomed. It is a great thing to look at as belonging to another race of beings—this perpetual inaccessibility to death. But it is a still more impressive thing to look at as a feature of our own race of sinful and responsible beings. The immortality of such beings has a solemn grandeur about it which that of the holy angels cannot have. The latter is shone upon by the soft light of heaven alone; the other has in addition the lurid brightness of a far different world.

The image of God! Yes, the image of God,



every man of them—notwithstanding a part of mankind look scornfully down on another part, and treat them as if they belong to another race and are quite unworthy of notice. How cruelly such conduct defies *facts!* Are not these real men? Have they not human intellects, wills, hearts? Is there any limit to their power of expansion? Is not the humblest of them immortal? Has not every man of them the sublime faculty and opportunity of a glorious virtue and a glorious heaven? What though their skins are dark, or their hands horny, or their clothes poor, or their gait and port somewhat less than imperial? They are kings for all that—kings in disguise, if you will, but still kings. Shall we say that the Kohinoor was not a diamond, so long as it lay uncut and unset and unfound amid the rubbish of its native sands?

Such is the view of human nature given in the Scriptures. They show God doing for it with a care and zeal that never flag; doing for it all that the case admits of being done; doing for it that exceeding much implied in the incarnation and atonement and perpetual mission of the Holy Ghost. Does God move heaven and earth for nothing? Is he so bent on saving what is poorly worth saving? Did apostles undertake such toils and martyrdoms for

ephemeridæ, or for anything short of the image of God? Do not believe it. It were preposterous to believe it. Such conduct, translated into speech, says: "And what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Whence came this paragon? If mere nature is insufficient to originate other species, it is doubtless insufficient to originate the human. After such a full account of the origin of Adam and Eve by direct divine action as the Bible gives, we have a right to expect that no believer in that book will talk to us in favor of our race coming in a natural way from apes, and at last from minerals. But, apart from exegesis and the human body, what sufficient account can be found in mere nature for the human *soul*? What cannot explain a worm can hardly explain a Newton. Unless we admit that the soul is the result of organization (which would at once land us in materialism, with all its defiance of Scripture and natural religion), we must allow it to have been a divine creation, and that the prophet was right in saying, "He formed the spirit of man within him."

We learn from the Scriptures that man is comparatively a recent being; that his original seat was in the neighborhood of the Euphrates; that he began not as a unit, but as a pair; not

in a desert, but in a beautiful garden; not as an ape, but as one of ourselves; not as an infant, but in full maturity of bodily and mental powers; not as a rude savage, but at what, though simple, was really a high stage in main things; not as a frail and dying being like ourselves, but as constitutionally immortal; not as a depraved and sinning being, but as altogether upright and righteous—though in a state of temptation and probation—and having free and intelligent communication with higher beings, and especially with his Maker. Some of these particulars—for example, the comparatively recent origin of our race, its unity and the general Asiatic region where it occurred—are known from other sources as well as from the Bible. From the nature of the case all the original traits and circumstances of the first man were determined by the sovereign choice and agency of his Maker. They were the capital with which a father sets up his son in business; the fire, fuel, graded track and skilled engineer with which a locomotive comes forth from the works to run its courses; the location, lands, buildings, apparatus, professorships with which the founder of a university starts it off on its educational career; the rounded shape, sun-distance, axis elevation, initial velocity, atmosphere, waters, stores of useful minerals and vegetables, with

which the Creator of this habitable planet launched it into space; that is to say, the original capital and endowments with which the Father, Builder, Founder, Creator of the race chose, in the exercise of his sovereignty and wisdom, to send it forth on its mission.

##### 5. INSIGNIA COMMON TO ORGANIC SPECIES.

Organic beings are divided into groups by certain sensible differences. The broadest division is into vegetables and animals. Each of these two great classes is subdivided into a multitude of others, in each of which the numbers are alike in main respects and incapable of reproduction, at least in a series, with the other sub-classes. So, organic nature is an archipelago. It appears in the form of innumerable organic islands.

Now, these islands, which we call species, have had from the beginning, so far as we know, certain traits in common which are very striking—so striking that they deserve to be singled out and distinctly referred to that personal divine action which must have chosen and established them; more especially as they strongly suggest, if they do not prove, a form of divine action other than that concerned in constructing organic beings. They seem as independent of structure as are the purple robes

and other insignia worn by princes of the bodies that wear them.

All species of such beings have something that we call *Life*. We give this name to that which keeps in play their seemingly self-active natures. Just what this something is has been matter of long and fierce discussion; and even to-day scientists, as such, are as much in the dark as ever, though we have what is called a Science of Biology. Is it something within the bodies themselves—either some distinct inspiring essence inhering in them or some peculiar correlation of the atoms and forces composing them, or is it some force from without empowering them for their apparently spontaneous functions? In the first case, life is of course due to Him who not only contrived and made the first parents of each species, but without whom our science cannot explain a single individual of their successors; as we will soon try to show.

If, under the pressure of such facts as that the power of spontaneous movement for an end is not in harmony with our fundamental ideas of matter, that it seems to precede all visible organization, and that it ceases while yet organization seems quite unimpaired—I say, if under the pressure of such facts we elect the latter supposition of the dilemma, what can that

vitalizing force from without be save the divine? What other do we know of sufficient for the work? What other force than His of whom the Scriptures choose to say, "He giveth to all life and breath;" "He upholdeth our soul in life;" "In him we live and move and have our being"? Is it so very unlikely that the seemingly spontaneous movements of bioplasm, as it throws out its bridges and drives hither and thither its shuttles, are not spontaneous at all, but are the work of Him of whom Job inquires, "Did not He that made me in the womb make him, and did not One fashion us in the womb?"

All organic species have also *growth*. No instrument made by man either lives or grows; every organism in the animal and vegetable worlds, without exception, does both. Beginning with a very small structural unit, each individual takes on symmetrically additions to all its parts, until in process of time it comes to many times its original size. This universal fact among living things is very wonderful—about as much so as life itself—and as yet quite unexplained on natural principles. We know that the material for growth is found in the sap or blood, and that, *somehow*, out of this is filtered to the various parts what they need for their upbuilding; but here our knowledge

ends. That *somehow* is a dark continent which our science has not yet landed on, nor even approached. What force directs that sure and silent analysis and synthesis? Who is the principal in that consummate laboratory?

To say that bioplasm, or living matter in its earliest observable state, moves toward and appropriates lifeless matter and endows it with its own properties, is far enough from giving a scientific explanation of growth. It is a mystery from the side of science—as much of a mystery to-day as it was when it was said of the seed, “It springs and grows up he knows not how,” or when at an earlier time it was said, “As thou knowest not the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child, even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all.” Is it done by mere vitality and structure, well conditioned chemically and mechanically? Growth ceases when as yet there is no discoverable vital, structural or circumstantial change. Besides, what is growth but a kind of self-reproduction—a gradual reproduction on a larger scale of the original organic unit? In a few years the whole original matter is eliminated and replaced by new matter. We have an entirely new and better structure, but on the plan of the old. But is it conceivable that an in-

strument can produce its own equal, much more its own superior?

Again, each species has its own *fixed range of structural variation*. Thus, men differ among themselves as individuals and races, as John differs from James, and as the lowest Hottentot from the highest Caucasian. Food, climate, many circumstances, go to modify our inward structure as well as outward appearance. But the range of this variability is limited. Go a little way and you come to a wall as high as heaven. So with every species of animals or vegetables. Each has its own measure of structural flexibility to suit varying circumstances: if the human range is called one league, then that of another species is two leagues or more, but never runs on into the infinite; very far from it. We only go a little way, and, lo, a *ne plus ultra* built squarely across the path which neither art nor force can remove. It has never been passed, save in hypothesis. Observation being teacher, the different species never come to overlap or to be coterminous. They even remain widely apart; they are as far apart to day as they were at the dawn of history, or at that vastly more remote time when their earliest fossils were living. Each species, like a jealous property-holder, seems to say to its neighbor, "No trespassing allowed." They



are all ships of a fleet, each riding at anchor on a cable of definite length which allows some change of place as change the winds and tides, but is still such as to keep it at a safe distance from all its fellows. They are all like the stars, radiant islands, each of which has its own range of minute changes, but never so roves as to collide with any other star. Such is the famous doctrine and fact of the stability of species.

How are these *termini* of structure to be explained? What keeps each species rigidly within its own bounds? Is there anything in its make-up to prevent its varying indefinitely? Nothing that is visible. May I not say, Nothing that is conceivable? Such variations as actually occur would, if continued, carry it into another species, and finally through all the species. And yet just as soon as the variation reaches a certain point it stops. Of course, if this is due to some invisible physical terminus, some Westinghouse brake hid in the nature of the species itself, it was God, the contriver and maker of that nature, who placed it there. But it looks as though there were no such limit within itself. What is there in mere human nature to prevent its appearing in as many varieties as do pigeons? We know of nothing to prevent it but the current choice and agency of God.

There are other *termini* of organic species,

each of which is quite as remarkable as that just mentioned, but of which I must speak collectively. Each species has its own range of life-duration, of adult stature and of growth-period. One never lives beyond a few days or hours, another never beyond a few months, another never beyond a few years. One never rises more than a few inches above ground, another never more than a few feet, still another never more than a few hundred feet. One always gets its growth in less than a hundred years, another in less than twenty, still another in less than a day. The members of the same species vary among themselves somewhat as to these particulars, but there is always a John o' Groat's House beyond which none of them ever go. At present men attain a size of about six feet and an age of about eighty years, and their growth-period is about twenty years.

And so every species of animals and plants has its own general limit of size, of age and of growth-period. Whence came these differences? Of course, either from a current divine Providence steadily holding each species to the *termini* thought best for it, or from some peculiarity in the physical make-up and conditions of each species. But the differences seem quite independent of structure and environment. No structural bounds are visible even to keenest-

eyed science. What reason in nature why a peach tree cannot live as long and grow as large as an oak; why a dog cannot live as long and grow as large as a man; why a man cannot live out the three centuries of an oak as well as a little more than threescore years, stop growing at twelve feet of height as well as at six, continue growing for forty years as well as for twenty? Certainly, the actual terms seem purely arbitrary. They seem to exist by no necessity of nature or construction, but by the sovereign will and efficiency of a current Providence, which, for reasons best known to itself, says to the stature and life and growth of each organic species, "Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther."

We also find all animals endowed with what are called *Instincts*.

At the first introduction of any species into the world it needed to have at once certain elementary informations (or their equivalent in blind impulses) as to ways and means of living and continuing the species. At once the new beings needed to avoid certain enemies. At once they must be able to move about freely, to find their suitable food and drink, to appropriate these by the curious and artificial process of eating and drinking. But originally they had no fellows to imitate. They could not

afford to wait the slow teaching of experience. That very day they must begin to protect and nourish the life they had received. So, from the very outset, they had to be supplied with some promptly-acting means of guidance. These were furnished by their Maker, and should be allowed to be what are now known to us under the name of *instincts*. We find these sufficient for the work required, and they have actually been doing it as far back as we can trace.

It is a question whether these instincts came necessarily from the very nature of the animal (so that God established them in the very act of making that nature), or whether he, by a supplementary act, as it were, equipped that nature with what it needed but could not supply from itself. I am inclined to say that just as a householder, when his house is fully completed, still needs to have certain furniture placed in it to make it fairly available; that just as a sailor, when his ship is well launched and quite done, even to the last iota of rigging, still needs to have it provisioned for the voyage; that just as the inexperienced owner of a new watch or factory, though it is exquisitely finished down to the smallest details and beautifully running, still needs to be shown how to keep it running—so the animal tribes immediately on their advent, though perfect in their

way for the time being, still needed to be shown at once the ways and means of continuing so; to be supplied with a certain preliminary capital of information in order that they might go about their business. A single day must not pass before they know at least what to eat and how to eat. So their Maker guided them—gave them what we call instincts. Instead of being the necessary outcome of the nature of the animal, instincts are an *annex* to that nature by direct divine interposition.

Let us notice some of these instincts as they now exist. They give actions relating solely to the preservation of the individual and species. Plainly, these actions do not come from imitation, nor are they reached in the course of many crude attempts and failures. But, quite without help of observation and experiment, and as if by some necessity of nature, they are found done with perfect freeness and unerring accuracy just as soon as occasion arises—done as well on first attempt, as far as strength will allow, as after long practice. For example, most animals immediately after birth fix without hesitation on the kind of food appropriate to them out of many kinds around them that are inappropriate, convey it to the one right opening into the body, and proceed to drink and eat as if veterans at the business. The arts of

running, swimming, flying and singing are aboriginal with vast sections of the animal races. Embryo languages that call, warn, defy, and even elaborately inform (as in the case of some ants), come to them spontaneously. What naturalists call "the habits of animals" are not habits at all, save in the etymological sense; the measures they take to get a living, to defend themselves against their enemies, to provide for their young, presenting themselves complete as soon as circumstances call for them. The duck would hasten to the pool, the hen scratch the ground, the pig root, the cattle seek the pasture, the beaver build his dam, the gull dive for fish, the humming-bird probe the heart of flowers, the squirrel become an acrobat and lay up his stores of nuts, if from the beginning secluded from all others of its kind. The spider weaves its delicate web, spreads it out in the way of insects, lies in wait where it can best feel any disturbance of its meshes, waits till the captive is exhausted by its struggles, then sallies forth to secure its prey—a born hunter. The wasp makes a cell, deposits its egg, places by the side of it as many green worms as will suffice to feed its larva till it gets wings and can care for itself—a born naturalist as well as mother. Many species are born artists. The bird will, without instruction or experience, at

the proper time of the year, artistically build a nest suitable in size, shape, material and situation; deposit its eggs, sit on them till the young appear, provide the young with suitable food and protection till they can care for themselves, and then, perhaps, as the winter comes on, associate with a host of others of the same species and migrate to sunnier lands. The ants or honey-bees associate themselves, come under government, distribute occupations among themselves, find suitable places for homes, gather and work up fitting materials into the wonderful ant-city with its complex of paths and its magazines of winter stores, or into the wonderful honeycomb with its mathematical cells filled with pellucid nectar. Hardly less curious things are done naturally by many other sorts of animals. In many cases these instinctive actions are a large and intricate *system*, the parts of which are delicately framed into and proportioned to each other about as artificially as are the members of an animal body. This is most strikingly true of the humbler sorts of animals. But *every* species has its own striking set of measures conducive to self-preservation, to which it turns as does the free needle toward the pole—a set of measures which it seems born to, which seem to come to it on occasion ready made, which all its individuals use with

equal facility and success, and in precisely the same way, the world over, and from generation to generation—in short, things which they seem to do out of the fullness of natural knowledge.

To say that such actions come from mere matter and its organization is bald materialism, with its malarial consequences. Such things cannot give rise to intuitive intelligence, or to intelligence of any kind. As little can they give rise to volitions, which are as spiritual products as thought itself, and the immediate parents of all the instinctive actions we have been considering. And just as little can they give rise to any such blind impulses as are equivalent to intelligence, so far as effects are concerned. If a broad system of voluntary actions, such as in man would be thought to imply intelligence of a high grade (such as we see in the economy of bee-life), can reasonably be supposed to come in any way from mere bodily nature and structure, it is hard to see how such an explanation cannot reasonably be extended indefinitely—say to all the various external actions of men and brutes that are commonly supposed to be prompted and guided by intelligence. Can matter be so put together as to turn out results that imitate the best results of intelligence to that degree that it is impossible to discriminate the one class



from the other? If so, materialism is sufficient to explain everything, and the Newtonian philosophy requires us to use it for that purpose, though it carries in its womb fatalism and irresponsibility, and so the abolition of government, of immortality, of religion, of God, of moral distinctions, and, finally, of the whole frame of society—in short, Nihilism that devours everything in this world and the next, save hell.

But the brute nature has an intelligent part. Can this give rise to the intuitions, or blind impulses, that are the root of the instinctive actions we have been considering? Can *any* intelligent principle originate blind impulses? To say it seems very much like saying that it is possible to get out of a thing what is not in it; that it is not a fundamental law that everything begets after its kind; that fig trees may bear thistles, grapevines bramble-berries, and matter mind. Can such an intelligence as the brutes possess of itself give intuitions altogether above the human? If so, then their sort of mind is above ours. What they see at a first glance we see only after laborious scientific processes. That hexagonal cell of the bee, that provision which the wasp makes for her worm-young of food which she cannot eat herself, but which is just suited in quality and

quantity to the larva, is to us a research and philosophy—the luminous jet at the end of a considerable amount of machinery. An intelligence whose merest flashes of outlook are level with the researches of philosophers is grander than the mind of Newton. But, in point of fact, we know that the brute mind is nothing of the sort—a mere rushlight in the presence of the great effulgent candelabrum, a toy spy-glass in the presence of the most space-penetrating telescope that ever looked toward the frontiers of creation. “Ye are of more value than many sparrows.” No, we cannot account for the ready-made arts and sciences found in the bee-hive or ant-hill or beaver-camp on the ground that they come, lightning-paced, out of the native powers of such a grade of intelligence as this.

Besides, if the intuitions in question came only from the intelligent part of the animal, and so depended solely on the degree of its power, they would not be limited, as they are, to the means of preserving the individual and species, but would extend in every direction to other fields of knowledge of no greater remoteness and difficulty—just as the eye that sees clearly the objects at a certain point in the landscape is not restricted to a view of these, but, in general, can see with equal clearness all

other objects at the same distance quite around the horizon. Mere intelligence makes, not a luminous line, but, like the sun, a luminous sphere. But the instincts of the brute illumine only a long, narrow strip of the great domain of knowledge. All other parts, however near, on the right hand and left, remain in profound darkness. It is as though the vision were abruptly broken off by solid black walls as high as heaven. From noon to midnight. From the state of kings to starvation. The brutes are no longer embodied arts and sciences, but living know-nothings. This looks very much as if their intuitions were given them from without, for a purpose, by some eclectic power—by their MAKER, who wished to qualify them capitally for their place, but designed that place to be a narrow one—a narrow Swiss valley walled with Alps, on some lofty peak of which man stands and looks away freely into all Europe.

Another epical fact common to all organic species, from the lowest to the highest, is *Parentage*. Let us first notice it in connection with man.

Man becomes a parent. A miniature self appears—body as complete as his own; as complete as his own the new soul. Whence came that child-body? Have the parents had any-

thing to do with *devising* its world of complex and exquisite mechanism? Consciously not—no more than the bird has with devising its chicken, or the oak with devising its sprouting acorn. Are they mere machines, turning out unintelligently other machines like themselves? This seems mechanically impossible. A pin-machine can turn out pins, but not pin-machine *makers*. Men can turn out, in an instrumental way, blood or bile, but not men, and especially not men-*makers*. Even God himself cannot make his equal. What remains but for each man to say with Job, “Thy hands have made me and fashioned me together round about”?

Further, with each body-birth there is a soul-birth. The body receives an inhabitant. It is not matter, but something that can think, feel, choose. It is not a product of bodily organization and the chemistries, but something that can survive the organism that serves it for a house, and even flourish on for ever—the master of the mansion, the charioteer of the chariot, the image of the spiritual God. Whence came this soul? It remembers no past. It is as fresh and dewy with tokens of recentness as the first bud of spring. Can body produce soul? Can even soul unconsciously produce another soul? In all the range of causation, outside of the present field of inquiry, where

has a cause been known to make the equal of itself? But the child is often spiritually superior to the parent.

Plainly, something besides nature must be concerned in the human production. Unless we allow this, we must allow both the possibility and naturalness of atheistic evolution. For if mere nature, without any exercise of devising intelligence, can originate the simplest embryo of a new man, and then, in virtue of its own resources, can develop that embryo in the course of some months through various ascending forms as diverse from each other as species into the new-born child, why cannot it generate some *moneron*, and then develop it in the course of some millions of years through various like ascending specific forms into a man? It can. And so there is no need of a God to account for anything. If we reject this conclusion we must claim that, behind the veil of natural conditions and agencies, the supernatural is active in every case of reproduction. Each new human body as much requires a divine Framers as did the first man. Each new human soul as much requires a divine Author as did the soul of Adam.

Now, these wondrous births have been going on from the beginning with ever-increasing freeness; the one trunk put forth branches, each

of these branches itself ramified, each of these ramifications spread itself out abruptly into an immense fan of new being, and so on until now some two hundred thousand new human bodies and souls present themselves on the earth each day.

But this is only one of many streams of descent. For a long time before the flux of human generations began, innumerable other births scarcely less wonderful had taken place among the brute and vegetable races; and these have continued without intermission, in floods that defy statement or imagination, down to the present time. At least a hundred thousand species of flora are continually (as we say) reproducing themselves and making the whole earth green with perpetual youth. At least a million species of brute fauna are continually (as we say) reproducing themselves—some of them with amazing rapidity. Thus, a single herring can deposit about forty thousand eggs in one season, a flounder a million, the common oyster still more; and an insect called the cyclops in four months can have forty-five hundred millions of descendants. The microscopic animalculæ are still more prolific, a single individual of one species being capable of multiplying in four days to one hundred and seventy billions. When we consider the vast numbers

of individuals in many of these species—as, for example, in that of the herrings, each of which sometimes sends out a thousand billions or more in a single company—and how each one of these increases like money at compound daily interest, we feel quite lost in this perpetual deluge of new life. What is it but a perpetual deluge of personal divine action—of *wondrous* divine action?

The utter insufficiency of merely natural causation to account for a single one of these practically infinite reproductions ought to be easily admitted. The same reasons that demand the supernatural for each new man demand it for each new worm or weed. A thing cannot make the equal of itself. It is against experience. It is unthinkable. Accordingly, the Scriptures declare that the heathen are without excuse for not knowing God, because his works immediately about them (not some remote first parents) clearly declare his eternal power and Godhead. That is, the *present* environment of every man, the wonders *now* seen in the earth and sky, are plainly unexplainable by mere nature. It is not necessary for him to grope his way back some thousands of years to a beginning of the organic races in adult individuals which only a true God could have made. Otherwise, he would have a very good excuse for not

knowing him—if the impossibility of doing it can be considered a good excuse.

It is commonly said that the age of miracles has long since passed, and that God never now gives water from a rock nor bread from the sky. And unbelievers are apt to clamor for at least one good rousing miracle, and to protest that if it could be had they would at once flash into faith as gunpowder flashes at the touch of a live coal. Miracles! Let people look about them. Not a day passes that is not more shining with miracles of creation and construction than it is with the sun. We float in miracles as ships do in the ocean. Our homes, though men call them hovels, are floored and walled and ceiled with this gold. No miracles now-a-days! It is time such talk had ceased—time to cease quietly assuming, as even Christians are apt to do, despite the whole tenor of Scripture, that amazing postulate that mere nature is amply sufficient to account for the successive generations of the world. What a mistake! Parents are hardly more than a divine laboratory, or the chariots by which the young ride into being. The Amazon, sweeping on to the sea in ever-widening flood, is modified in many respects by the country through which it passes; but every new drop contributed to it at any point comes from



above—from yonder high and snowy peak or yonder higher sky.

#### 6. A GREAT UNITY.

All men, however far apart in place and physical characteristics, are descended from a single pair. This doctrine, though generally admitted by scholars, has sometimes been objected to on the ground of the very great differences between the races of men, especially between the Caucasian and the negro. But these differences are such in kind as differences of climate and modes of living, in connection with well-known laws of heredity, are found to make in the course of long periods, and are no greater in degree than sometimes exist between persons known to be of the same stock. We find great variety among Englishmen as to stature, complexion, thickness of lip, straightness of hair and frontal development. Even in the same family the children are often vastly unlike each other, both physically and mentally.

It is not surprising that persons beginning with such a great divergence should, in the lapse of generations, produce descendants as far apart as are Europeans and Nubians. Two very unlike brothers, separating into two very unlike countries and marrying very unlike wives, would naturally have families still more

unlike each other; and a repetition of this process through several generations might easily give us as wide a range of varieties in men as we actually find.

American history carries us back to Europe; European history carries us back to Rome and to rude tribes drifting westward from Asia along the northern parallels; the history of Rome carries us back to the Asian Troad and to the Greek colonies of Magna Grecia; the history of Greece carries us back to the immigration of the Asian Hellenes and to the crude embryos of states that were looking wonderingly toward the already full-grown glories of Tyre and Thebes and Babylon and Nineveh, and the rich and populous empires which some of these great cities represented.

By the general consent of historians, these cities, especially the last two, show us the earliest known peoples. Existing monuments confirm this testimony. The general result of the latest researches is stated by Prof. Rawlinson as follows: "Cuneiform scholars confidently place the beginnings of Babylon about B. C. 2300; of Assyria, about B. C. 1500. For Phœnicia the date assigned by the latest English investigator is the sixteenth or seventeenth century before Christ. The best Aryan scholars place the dawn of Iranic civilization about

B. C. 1500; of India, about B. C. 1200. Chinese investigation can find nothing solid or substantial in the past of the Celestials earlier than B. C. 781, or, at the farthest, B. C. 1154. In Europe the incipient civilization delineated by Homer may have commenced as early as the Trojan epoch, which is probably about B. C. 1300-1200. No other European civilization can compete with this—the Etruscan not reaching back farther than about B. C. 650 or 700.”

Leaving out of view that much-debated country, Egypt, whose antiquity has of late so dwindled in the thought of scholars, we find that the lines of history converge on Asia, and especially on the region about the Euphrates, as the most ancient seat of the human race, where it first ripened into nations and whence it radiated into other parts of the world.

Years ago Humboldt told the world that the American Indians of the Far West were indissolubly united by the ties of *language* with the Asiatics. Later, Max Müller wrote: “There was a time when the ancestors of the Celts, the Germans, the Persians, the Hindus, were living together under the same roof.” The languages of all these peoples have certain common radicals. The same elemental terms for tree, ox, father, mother, son, daughter, heart,

tears, dog, cow, God, are found, more or less disguised, in them all. Each is a composite made up of the fragments of earlier speech, and among these fragments are some that are common to all the Indo-European languages, though immemorially separated by whole earth-diameters. These common elements are exceedingly primitive in their aspect—as readily seen to be primitive as are fossil trilobites when found by geologists *in situ*.

Just as the structures of modern Rome show in their walls the remains of the ancient city, and so proclaim it; just as the later geologic formations show in themselves the ruins of primary rock, and so proclaim it,—so the present Indo-European languages proclaim in their make-up a common quarry of ancient speech from which, in part, they have drawn their materials. As these common materials are largely, if not wholly, arbitrary and conventional, they must have come from one source. Linguistic scholars are practically a unit in this verdict; also in thinking that this original tongue was Asian, was inland, and is most fully represented to-day by the Persian and Sanskrit tongues. The mother-speech was a child of Central Asia.

But this relates only to the Aryan or Indo-European family of languages. What of the

Turanian and Semitic and other outlying tongues not yet fairly classified? Can they be traced back to the same ultimate fountain-head with the rest?

The answer to this question does not rest on so broad a foundation of research as does the conclusion just stated as to the Indo-European tongues, and yet the leading linguists of the day have seen their way to say that "nothing necessitates the admission of different independent beginnings for the *material* elements of the Turanian, Semitic and Aryan branches of speech; nay, it is possible even now to point out radicals which under various changes and disguises have been current in these branches ever since their first separation." And Max Müller, whose words have just been quoted, and who is our greatest authority in such matters, goes so far as to say: "If inductive reasoning is worth anything, we are justified in believing that what has been proved to be true on so large a scale, and in cases where it was least expected, is true in regard to language in general." That is, all the wisps and spurs of language have not as yet been carefully studied, but so many of its main streams have been followed that their general trend toward unity is clear, and the induction is imperative that, as the St. Petersburg Academy says, "All dialects

are to be considered as dialects of one now lost." This is agreed to by such men as Klaproth and Herder even, who look with little favor on the Book that says, "And the whole earth was of one speech and one language."

As one examines the main streams in a country, and finds one after another, even those widest apart, flowing toward the same sea, he has the right gradually to get confident that the remaining small streams scattered among them have the same destination.

Thus, the lines of both history and language converge on unity. We find our thought beckoned to one central district in Asia, to one people, to one primal speech, and at last to that one original pair of which traditions, as well as our Scriptures, tell. For not only do we find among the leading and widely-separated nations traditions of a Flood, of a preceding age of supreme wickedness, of a primitive Golden Age—which can be reasonably explained only by supposing a time when men were all together as one people, holding these views and carrying them with them as they diverged into different countries—but also traditions of a single pair from which have sprung all the nations of mankind. Says Max Müller: "So far as I know, there has been no nation on

the earth which, if it preserved any traditions on the origin of mankind, did not derive the human race from one pair, if not from one person." Also, Wilhelm von Humboldt, quoted with approval by his brother in *Cosmos*: "The separate mythical relations, found to exist independently of one another in different parts of the earth, concur in ascribing the generation of the whole human race to the union of one pair."

The Bible speaks of but one original pair. Eve is called the "mother of all the living." Prof. Rawlinson, in his *Origin of Nations*, shows that Genesis 10 expressly derives the leading Gentile nations from Noah. In the New Testament the sin and death of our whole race are traced to the fall of one man: "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." In short, the Scripture testimony in this direction is so clear and abundant that a belief in the unity of human origin has ever been wellnigh universal among believers in the Bible.

From the fact that all the streams of humanity have diverged from one source, it follows that this source was supernaturally opened. If nature had made man at the first, he would have had several distinct origins, especially in the

course of the long stretch of ages during which animal life has flourished on our globe. For aught we can see, mere natural circumstances have been quite as favorable in a thousand places and times as in one for the spontaneous generation of animal life and for its development on the human stage. The nature that made its way without help to one human pair is very unlikely to have stopped abruptly at that single wonder, and never once in all these years and lands have duplicated it. The chances are many millions to one against it.

Our unity of origin also implies a divine *administration* through all past ages, confining the currents of man-constructing energy to one channel. Nature *could not* restrain the exercise of this energy in God; she *would not* restrain its exercise in herself. The unthinking, universal mother, pushing out her motherly forces in every direction, and finding as little obstruction to their play in Africa and America as in Asia, as little obstruction in the year 6000 or 4000 *Anno Mundi* as in the year One, would not have narrowed herself down to a single birth in Eden, but would have given many independent births from the "rising of the sun to the going down of the same," and from the beginning until now.



## 7. LANGUAGE.

Spoken language is one of the seven wonders of the world. It broadly divides man from all other animals. Max Müller thinks he sees in it a complete refutation of the notion that man is genetically derived from lower species—by no means the only refutation of that ungracious notion.

Notwithstanding the mechanical and parrot imitations of the human voice by some brutes, none of them really make any approach to rational speech, and no ingenuity and patience in training have been found able to bridge the great gulf between the chatter of the ape and the majesty of articulate speech. And yet such speech is practically universal among men. There is no known human tribe that does not possess it. We search history, and even traditions, in vain for a people that has not its system, more or less copious, of arbitrary vocal signs for expressing facts, and also its own thoughts and feelings in view of those facts. Nay, on the very frontiers of the past, and among men as incapable of devising a rich language for themselves as were the contemporaries of Homer of devising that of the *Iliad*, we find some of the noblest tongues. The Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, Sanskrit, are fit to ex-

press the widest range of fact and thought, the most delicate scientific distinctions and subtleties and the loftiest flights of aspiration and fancy. And sometimes they fairly thunder and lighten with passion and thought and character. But into all speech the soul projects itself as it does into nothing else. Here may be found all the lights and shadows of humanity, all its greatness and littleness, all its joys and sorrows, all its virtues and sins.

Then what a wonder of endurance amid wonders of change! Dynasties and empires have fallen, arts and civilizations have died out, but speech still lives on in undecaying vigor. Not, indeed, without its changes. It has its flows and ebbs; becomes more or less copious as knowledge advances or recedes; puts on new dresses to suit the changed conditions, tastes and fashions of men; branches off easily into new forms, syntaxes and dialects, as the Latin has done to form the languages of Southern Europe; but as to dying, or even being sick, it has not even thought of such a thing. A *dead* language! The world has never yet seen that corpse. The Latin has become a Spaniard, a Frenchman an Italian, almost an Englishman; that is all. Migrations, cataclysms, barbarisms, amalgamations, fissions, do not touch its essential life. It laughs them all to scorn, and refuses

to be crushed by even the great wheels of the ages that grind rocks and empires to dust.

How did men come by this great acquisition? Some say that it is a purely human invention; primitive men having gradually found their way to it, in the course of long periods, under the pressure of their needs and powers. Others say that speech originally came directly from God, as did those primary knowledges of the brutes which we call instincts—that God did not merely furnish man with powers sufficient to invent it, but that, like their adult size and furnished home, it came to the first pair ready-made, a *regium donum*, a part of the original capital with which a rich Father sent them forth into the world. Is there anything in speech itself, or in its history, that does not harmonize with this latter view?

To be sure, spoken words are to a vast extent deceitful, abusive, heretical, slanderous, profane and corrupting. At times we can do the facts justice only by saying that “the tongue is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison; a fire, a world of iniquity, setting on fire the course of nature, and set on fire of hell.” And yet, with all the drawbacks on speech from the ignorance, carelessness, folly and wickedness of men, every sensible man would think it a calamity were the race to be struck dumb. But even if it would

not be so—if it could be shown that thus far in the human history the harm done by speech has, as a matter of fact, greatly exceeded the good—it would not follow that such a gift could not properly come from God. Plainly, that harm has no necessary connection with speech, any more than rust has with a royal sword. Its nature no more enforces its being a curse than does the nature of the esculent grain enforce whisky, drunkenness, and at last brutedom and murder. Dealt with as we may deal with it, dealt with reasonably and righteously, it would at once shed what is low and unsightly as the butterfly does its caterpillar envelope. Then how brilliant would appear that speech which even now shows, through haze and cloud, so many brilliant points of utility!

Speech is the easiest and clearest means of communication between man and man. It is the voice of consolation to the stricken, of instruction to the ignorant, of hope to the desponding, of affection to friends, of warning to the endangered, of rebuke to sin, of persuasion toward righteousness. It is the chief instrument by which parents and others train the earlier and more plastic years of life to intelligence, virtue and usefulness; indeed, it is a main factor in education at all stages, especially as being the foundation of written language, and so of all

those accumulations of fact and thought which make each generation the heir of all its predecessors. It is the eloquence that persuades in democracies and legislatures to just measures and laws. It is the voice of prayer, of sacred song, of the Christian ministry going into all the world and preaching the gospel to every creature. Nay, it is the voice of Christ speaking "as never man spake."

Are the primary teachings of cultured and virtuous homes useful? Is that useful which makes society possible and puts man in close communication with both earth and Heaven? Do we owe anything to the preaching of the gospel, the tuneful speech of praising congregations, the devout upliftings of public prayer and the glory of audible worship in closet or family or temple? Blot out the good done by conversation; by oral teaching in the nursery, the school, the university; by lectures, orations, sermons; by discussions, appeals, expositions in conventions and congresses and cabinets and courts of justice,—and our whole landscape, away to the uttermost horizon, would be shaded into inkiness by the terrible spatterwork.

A word spoken in due season, how good is it! Nothing less than "apples of gold in pictures of silver." Nothing less than "a precious

jewel." Is it not the foster-mother of both civilization and religion? Such a thing as this, with which evils in the main have no more vital connection than weeds have with a garden, clouds with the sun, poisonous serpents with the broad and fruitful river whose banks they haunt, and from which they will be gradually driven as the surrounding country becomes settled and improved—such a thing is this speech of ours, which when reasonably used is always beneficent, the irrigator of deserts, the cleanser of Augean stables, the distributor of truth and religion and social riches among men, and so harmonizing perfectly with the idea that it came directly from God; as, indeed, the Scriptures seem to clearly teach that it did. For they show our first parents, while they were yet in the garden (which could have been for a short time only, else they would have become confirmed in obedience), naming the brutes about them and holding converse with each other, with their Maker and with the tempter. It appears that they were able from the first to understand the divine words that told them of their sovereignty over the other living tribes, of what they were to use for food, of their duties in caring for the garden, and of the terms on which alone they could retain their beautiful home and the divine favor. So, from the very

beginning, man was in possession of language: as the bee is in possession of the art of cell-building, and the singing bird of his variety of song. And yet a system of vocal signs for outward and mental facts does not necessarily spring at once from the human nature and environment. It is purely arbitrary. So the divine action implied in it was distinct from that which created man and set him in his place.

This was only the first verse of a long chapter. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." They spake, "not in the words which man teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." And some of them, when brought before rulers, found the promise fulfilled which said, "It shall be given you in the same hour what ye ought to speak." Encouraged by such cases, Christians have often found confidence to pray that God would "put right words into their mouths as well as right thoughts into their minds;" and, seemingly, have not prayed in vain.

#### 8. UNIVERSAL FAITHS.

In a survey of mankind we find everywhere certain fundamental religious convictions: for example, that man consists of two very dissimilar parts, a material body, and an immaterial soul within it; that there is a most important

distinction in the very nature of things between right and wrong; that there is a world of invisible beings, whose chief is, to all intents and purposes, infinitely above the human level; that worship is due to this great Being; that he has much to do with human affairs; that he holds men responsible for character and conduct in a future state of rewards and punishments; that, as a matter of fact, men are universally very guilty beings; that yet atonement may be made for sin, the Deity placated and pardon secured. Such views have been held by the great masses of men in every known age. If here and there a person has expressed dissent, his puny voice has been drowned in the general chorus of humanity.

Among those who read these words there will be but one mind as to the salutary character of these world-wide convictions. They are to our broken human nature what the splints are to the broken limb around which they are securely fastened—the necessary conditions of its safety and recovery. They do not set the limb, but they keep the fracture from enlarging till the surgeon arrives, and, when he has done his work, they secure it and enable the parts to knit together.

This is a fair statement, as far as it goes. But it does not go far enough. It is hardly



possible to state too strongly the importance of those great religious beliefs that so dominate every nation and age. They are the mother of all wholesome restraints, the father and mother of all wholesome promptings. They are anchors to hold us back from universal breakers, gales to waft us toward all heavenly harbors. They are the only ground on which we can set up our catapults against temptation and wickedness, the only ground on which we can build and fortify a positive and enduring human virtue. They are the last foundation of practical morals; and, whatever rubbish has gathered over them, or whatever unsightly structures have been raised on them by ignorance, superstition and wickedness, they are still the great and phenomenal substructions of Solomon's temple, worthy of a better fate, and on which some day a glorious temple will stand. The world is bad enough with these cosmic notions; without them it would be the mouth of hell. The foul outpouring breath would poison us to the very centre, convert us into one huge cancer: and now, what shall be done with the horrible thing, save to cut it out of the universe by the sharp surgery of the Almighty? Blow, all ye winds, blow! and drive back into its parent pit that noisome pestilence.

Such is the vast worth of those primary religious beliefs which, so far as we can trace, have always leavened the masses of mankind. For God to have introduced them by direct revelation would not have been unworthy of him, but the contrary. We say at once, and almost without needing a moment for thought, "Such an origin is perfectly credible, is quite consistent with all we know of God, is just what we would naturally expect from him. Instead of bringing his hand into suspicion, it would positively illustrate and emphasize its goodness and wisdom."

But much more can be said. A house needs more or less furniture to make it available. After man was made he needed at once the elementary informations on religious matters which have just been mentioned, as the capital on which to start his career—needed them just as much as the brutes need those instincts with which they are born. But none of these elementary informations are intuitive. None of them are such easy and dynamic deductions from reason and observation as of themselves to enforce the attention and faith of all mankind. Witness the laborious and misty speculations of even such ripened men as Socrates and Plato. The unfledged and unaided powers of our first parents could hardly have succeeded

better—would not have succeeded so well. At the best, it would have been a mere fluttering and panting without progress. So God was called upon to furnish them what they needed by direct revelation. So, no doubt, he did furnish them.

The observed facts, like the streamers of an advancing army, point backward to the same conclusion. The elementary religious convictions, universal and immemorial, and which have always been held, not as a logic but as an heirloom, must have come down to us from the common ancestors of the race. Whence did these common ancestors get them? They were, at least, no more like axioms to the first man than they are to the last. They were no nearer the surface to the unaided eyes of our first parents than they are to ours. The gold nuggets must have shone up to them very doubtfully, if at all, as from the depths of shadowy mines. At the best they would have appeared to that fresh, unpracticed vision as do objects to one who has just opened his eyes from sleep in the light of morning. So God came to the help of the dazed eyes. He directly revealed to them what they needed to know at once, but could not at once discover for themselves.

The Scriptures teach as much. For they tell

us that God manifested himself directly to our first parents, held free verbal communication with them, told them of various things considerably less important than the fundamental religious truths. This fact alone assures us that these latter truths were not left unrevealed. The less would not have been told and the greater left unnoticed. We are now in the presence of the "law written in the hearts of men" and of a "faith that is the gift of God."

In addition to that divine action that made man there was another divine action altogether distinct: it was that which supplied him with certain primary religious ideas for which he could not afford to wait on reason, and which, indeed, the mass of men could never have argued out with sufficient clearness for their needs.

#### 9. SACRED WRITINGS.

I seem to be traveling through some astonishing country full of objects not to be seen elsewhere, or to be seen only in dwarfed forms—unequaled harvests; wonderful structures; inexhaustible diamond-fields; geysers that shoot their airy columns beyond sight; waterfalls pouring from heaven and vested in perpetual rainbow; forests and plains of boundless green alive with plants and animals of startling size, beauty and variety; rivers that sweep thou-

sands of miles in molten gold to a golden sea ; mountains whose summits are stars. What a land ! Why does not all the world run to see ?

Whatever may be thought of the truth of the Bible-teachings, there can be but one opinion as to the *greatness* of them. See some of these teachings.

*The Doctrine of a God.*—There is a Being who is the sum of all the infinites ; a Being who is one and yet three ; a Being who never began and will never end—self-existent, from everlasting to everlasting, found in whatever depth of the past or future to which our thought with its fleetest wings may carry us, though it fly for never so many millions of years ; a Being who knows absolutely all things—from whom nothing can be hid by darkness or depth or walls of masonry thick as Babylon's, or the labyrinths of hypocritical souls where they hide from themselves—nothing present or past or future, nothing actual or possible—nothing from the path of a planet to that of a microscopic insect with its myriads of sub-orbits of thought and feeling ; a Being who can do all things to which power has relation—whose hand can in a moment compress and crush into nothingness all nature to its farthest outposts ; a Being at the same time wearing

this crown of crowns, that he is as vast in righteousness and kindness of every sort as he is in wisdom, power and duration. In short, a Being who is the sum of many golden oceans each of which is shoreless and bottomless, not only to our sight, but to his own.

What a wonder! Above all men, above all giants of fable, above all the gods of the nations before whom long ages have trembled, above the mountain-tops scaled by the most soaring thought, rises this colossal PERFECTION.

*Doctrine of God as the Author of Nature.*—Out of nothing he made the substance of all things, whether material or spiritual. This substance he framed into the mineral, vegetable, animal and spiritual kingdoms—into worlds that shine on high and the world that shines below; into flocks and herds and swarms of living creatures that people land and sea and air; into trees and grains and fruits and flowers that sustain most of this roving life with life in another form only less brilliant; into a host of useful compounds which themselves have no life, but which minister as beauty or food or health to the things that live; countless armies of exquisitely framed things, by the side of the humblest of which all the inventions of men deserve no notice whatever—all

these were brought into being without means, simply by a stroke of will. What a great teaching is this!

*Doctrine of God as Universal Governor.*—God sitteth King for ever. He sitteth King everywhere. He does according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth—helping the good, hindering the bad, causing the wrath of man to praise him, and restraining the remainder of it. All things and events in all times and worlds are touched by his sceptre. It is never asleep. It is never careless. It is never too busy nor too weary. It is never hampered by want of agents or resources of any kind. The daily path and experiences of the humblest man that ever crept along earth's lowest vale is as carefully looked after by his Maker as is the career of a sovereign or a sun. Nay, see you yonder mote zig-zagging through the sunbeam? Not a motion, not a muscle, of that living speck but as truly feels the pressure of his will as do the radiant wing and orbit of an archangel.

Tell us not of our puppet human kings. Point us not to the vigilant and far-reaching sway of your Cæsars and Charlemagnes with their hosts of officials, police, soldiers. I know of none that astonishes me—at least when the stupendous, all-comprehending government of

God is before me, shooting its beams like a vertical sun till every part of every object is gilded, but, unlike the sun, gilding the remotest object as freely as the nighest. To this government there is no far and nigh, no small and great.

*Doctrine of Man's Immortal Soul.*—The real man—the intelligent, self-conscious, feeling, purposing *something* that lives within the dying human body, but is not of it—never dies. What! do you really mean *never*? Have you considered what that great word means? Yes, I mean a real NEVER—nothing of the poetical sort; if you please, NEVER a thousand times repeated. No disease nor accident has any power over the life of that inner man. It defies and easily vanquishes all the ages. This is true of the humblest soul as well as of the highest. Not a man to be found on all the breadth of the earth who is not heir to all the breadth of the future. We have all been dipped in the river Styx, and are invulnerable by any weapon death can use. Wheeling sword, thrusting spear, roaring cannon, famines, pestilences, earthquakes,—such things cannot even come nigh our citadel. Empires may sicken and die, worlds may grow old, stagger on their shining paths, and at last disappear, but of all the countless human souls at any time on the earth not one will ever drop



out of being, but each will go forward endlessly in full possession of all its faculties.

Is it not wonderful? In view of such a fact how much is a man worth? How much can one afford to take for himself?

*Doctrine of Angels.*—We are told of a broad realm of spiritual beings greatly superior to ourselves. They are winged, tireless, deathless, and can come and go without being noticed by us. They are intelligent and powerful and lofty of faculty enough to be called “thrones, principalities and powers.” Beyond counting are their hosts. Some of these many and great beings are very good, others very bad. They are all in constant communication with our world, keenly interested in its affairs, acting on us daily and powerfully for good or ill. The good angels are trying mightily to help us, the bad as mightily to hurt us. Between Satan and his angels on the one side, and the good angels on the other, it is keen struggle and war. And man is the prize to be lost or won. Whose shall we be? Satan, the roaring lion, says, *Mine*. And his we shall be unless we bestir ourselves and take the whole armor of God. Full of subtlety, full of malice, practiced in all expedients and doctrines of devils, even to appearing as an angel of light, campaigning against us summer and winter,

day and night, the prince of the power of the air and ruler of the darkness of this world will not be easily foiled.

What a great war it is! Naturally, how full of peril to us! What mighty enemies we have! Yes, but what mighty friends also! Know we of any profane history that tells of wars and warriors like these unseen ones—any Wagrams or Waterloos where a sublimer battle rages than this where the sword of Michael crosses the sword of apostate Lucifer?

*Doctrine of Individual Responsibility.*—Every man shall give account of himself to God, even for every idle word, and indeed for smaller things than that. God trieth the reins. Are you a king, and technically above law? Are you a priest and professional keeper of other men's consciences? Have you gotten an "independence," and so can live very much as you please? In yonder supreme court of all, the crown and the crozier and Fortunatus's purse will all be sure to appear, and all on a level with the spade and the fustian. Can a man, however adroit, manage to "shirk responsibility" there, as he sometimes tries to do here? Can one say to another, "I'll take the responsibility," and actually succeed in taking it? Though the priests cry, "His blood be on us and on our children!" will that clear Pilate?

Whatever the present look of things, and however long a man may go on undisturbed, he will at last find himself in front of the tribunal from which there is no appeal, and before a Book of Remembrance that probes all the smallest secrets of his life. Due regard will doubtless be had to all alleviating as well as enhancing circumstances; but let him see to it: "It shall be rendered to every man according as his work shall be."

Is not this a great doctrine—formidably great? Was the illustrious statesman far out of the way when he said, "The greatest thought I ever had was that of my individual responsibility to God." The man who stands unawed before the majesty of mountains and oceans and skies may well uncover before that of those heavenly balances into which surely go every act and thought and feeling of his life—not to gratify an idle or scientific curiosity on the part of Heaven, but for reward or punishment.

*Doctrine of Probation.*—We are now having our only probation. Now we may retrace wrong steps. Now we may recast the foundations of character. Now we may alter totally our attitude and relations to the government of God, and pass quite over the immense interval from disloyalty to loyalty, from condem-

nation to justification. All our sins may be forgiven, the rudiments of every virtue gained. But the time for this is limited. By and by, and that at no great distance, the gracious sun that is now shining will set, and never rise more. Let death surprise us with certain things undone, and, lo, the transfer-books of character and destiny are permanently closed.

This is something to think of, something great, something in the very front rank of greatness. *One* chance—threescore years long, it may be—and then never another. O land of the irreversible! What infinite meaning such a thought gives to our life in this world, especially in view of the Bible doctrine of what the irreversible future contains!

*Doctrine of a Perfect Law.*—Look at the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, the Two Commandments on which hang all the Law and the Prophets—at the filling up in all the Scriptures of this outline of what duty God requires of man! The Scripture ethics profess to be perfect. Are they not so? By common consent of friends and candid foes the Bible morality, translated from precept into the actual life and character of a man, would make him all we could wish. Society would only need to be made up of such men to meet our highest ideals.

If we would do them justice, these Bible ethics are not to be contrasted with those of the best of our unbelievers in Christian lands: these men have unconsciously absorbed their principles of morals from the biblical atmosphere in which they have always lived. But they should be contrasted with the views of right and wrong prevailing when and where the Scriptures were written. Considering the ages and countries out of which they came, they are simply wonderful for their comprehensiveness, purity and justice—at least as wonderful as it would be for snowy Caucasians to have Nubians for parents. To the best of us they say, as out of heaven, “Come up hither.”

*Doctrine of Infinite Sanctions.*—A world of glory, on the painting of which the imagination may lay out all its powers, and yet feel that the picture falls immensely short of the reality. A world of darkness, of which as much can be said. Both of these worlds *everlasting* homes to those once entering them—the one the sure recompense of God’s friends in this world, the other the sure recompense of his enemies!

By the side of these two as yet invisible worlds all that we see in the nightly sky are of no consequence. Such is the instant thought

of every reasonable man. To show the greatness of some things requires explanation and argument: we have to put the matter in this light and in that, go round it with our measuring-rod as did the angel about the celestial city; but such worlds of retribution as heaven and hell need only to be glanced at, and, lo, all other worlds disappear. Nothing remains in the wasted vault but two immeasurable orbs.

*Doctrine of a Divine Incarnation, Atonement and Mediatorship.*—To make heaven possible to all men, however sinful, the Son of God himself became flesh and dwelt among us many years, contradicted of sinners, treading thorny paths with bare feet, and at last, by sacrificial dying agonies, atoning for sin, and then returning to the skies as official Mediator for mankind.

What a doctrine is this! An unspeakable thing from the standpoint of nature. No doubt the angels, leaning over the celestial battlements, wondered and wondered as the sacred tragedy went forward. Let us wonder also.

*Doctrine of the Holy Spirit.*—Convincing the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment; silently yet mightily persuading in all hearts to right ways; anointing both the truth and seeing eyes with power; reversing the poles of life

and character to consenting souls; setting up the whole man on new moral foundations, and these of the whitest sculpture-marble, and thence proceeding to carry up by degrees a glorious Christian temple, into which, as wall or column or buttress or some other shining part, every virtue enters, and whose summit is white with heaven!

This work of regenerating and sanctifying souls is even more grand and consequential than the work of the creation. It is a *necessity*—not in that poor and low sense in which we sometimes use the word, but in the very highest. Without it what would have become of us, fallen, feeble, much-tempted creatures as we are! With such free and mighty helps what heights are possible to us! It seems that for our highest interests the almightiness of God is at our service. Amazing privilege!

*Doctrine of Exceeding Promises*—"exceeding great and precious promises," as the Bible calls them. Such as that God will give his Holy Spirit freely to all who ask him; that he will allow access to himself, at all times and for all sorts of things not sinful in themselves, to the meanest human being who wishes his help; that he will never suffer any hostile powers to pluck his people out of his hand and finally ruin them; that all things shall work together

for good to those who love God; that the gates of hell shall not finally prevail against his Church.

No such promises are found elsewhere. They have made many weak and fainting ones sublimely strong. They have set stars, moon, sun in many a black firmament. In many a desperate field they have turned the tide of battle in favor of truth and righteousness, and are, in fact, the sinews of our spiritual war and the banner which God gives to them who fear him.

*Doctrines of inspiration, miracles and sublime vistas of outlook through the history of the world*—vistas reaching on the one hand away back to the world's very beginning, and on the other away down to the world's very end; including a golden age, the resurrection of the dead, the general judgment and the earth in flames!

The teaching is that a divine influence so guided the pens of all the Bible-writers as to secure its being an infallible and complete rule of religious faith and practice. It gives us no error, and it gives us all needed truth in the best way. Further, it causes to pass before us in magnificent procession a long series of divine apparitions, ministries, signs and wonders, extending through the whole history of man,



and in the presence of whose gigantic and radiant forms all the events of common history are sapless trifles. And what a glorious stretch of view it is, from this Pisgah away back untold distances to the beginning when God made the heavens and the earth, and away down in the opposite direction untold distances, until at the end of the vista we see new heavens and a new earth!

Now put these great teachings of the Bible together so that they may be commanded by a single view. Have we not, indeed, a wonderland? Where is another book that offers so many ideas that strain our powers of conception? Oriental fiction, in its wildest imaginings, has never approached in strangeness and sublimity this glorious landscape. What are trees loaded with many-colored jewels, mountains borne aloft in the hands of genii, men flashed through the air on magical carpets, compared with one infinite personal God, his universal government, responsibility to him, a lost race, immortal souls redeemed, God manifest in the flesh, heaven and hell, atonement and regeneration and sanctification, the Mosaic and Christian miracles, and the glories of the world's last day? Such things are absolutely full of the elements of amazement and awe. Many a strong man has been quite overwhelmed by a

sense of their majesty. They are of infinite consequence to everybody—have had, and are destined to have still more, a wonderful influence on the world. I have walked through many a famed gallery of the Old World which great artists have glorified with their genius, but never with such abashed step and wondering heart as belong to any reasonable man as he passes through this divine gallery of paintings and sculptures called the Bible, of which God is both the artist and collector.

It is not surprising that this Book which is so great in its teachings should be found great in many other particulars. Its various parts are far above the level of the various times in which they appeared. Among books it has no peer in the amount and quality of the influence it has exerted and is still exerting. It is a great educational institution, doing more to educate the public heart, conscience, and even intellect, than any other teacher that has ever appeared. That endeavor to take in and do justice to its great thoughts which all Bible-readers are daily put upon is itself a liberal education. Is Homer with the art-galleries of his great epics, or some natural science with its roomy halls and museums of facts and laws, properly called an educational institution, and shall we deny the name to that castellated group of templed and pala-

tial thoughts and foundations which we call the Bible?

No other such reformer is known; no other such conservator of rights, properties, order, law. It does more to restrain men from the bad than all the prisons, polices and armies that ever frowned; more to stress them toward the good than all the philosophies, natural religions and natural rewards of virtue that ever smiled and beckoned toward that goddess. We speak of the world's great powers! The first among them is not Russia, nor Great Britain with its mighty horizons from sunset to sunset, but it is that vaster empire of the Book, with its wonderful adaptation to all times and peoples, its mountainous stability against all attacks, its vast uplifting power, its current rapid conquests in many lands, that is to-day the mightiest governor and conqueror on the face of the earth. So broad and strong and rightful and righteous and useful and promising for the world's future, we look all the lands through in vain in search of its fellow.

That this Book, with its various great features, has God for its author I have endeavored to show in another volume, and have steadily assumed from the beginning of the present work. But I have not yet distinctly called attention to the exceeding number, variety and

greatness of the divine actions involved in the Scriptures.

The Bible is really a composite of many revelations, made at different times, through different persons, over a stretch of many centuries, and so involving a great many distinct divine actions. Scarcely a single sacred penman, moreover, did his work at a sitting, but at intervals more or less long; and sometimes these intervals were of very great length. For example, the Psalms of David are known to have been composed in a long series, the terms of which were interspaced sometimes by many years. During all this time the divine inspiration was either continuous, or, as it is more reasonable to suppose, came upon the writers in distinct waves as it was needed and used, thus making a long series of divine actions.

The divine action in inspiring the sacred writers was very various. They were inspired to write history, biography, poetry in many forms, proverbs, prophecy, letters, and even what may be called philosophy. Facts and principles before dimly seen were made clearer; new facts and doctrines, otherwise inaccessible to us, were revealed; all that we need to know religiously was communicated; all error in doctrine and fact was precluded; even the words

of Scripture and their arrangement, so far as these might affect the value of the revelation, were divinely suggested; in short, the Book was made by a multitude of distinct and various divine actions an infallible and complete rule of religious faith and practice for all men—not only far superior to every other rule known to us, but, all things considered, a *perfect* rule. We are also to believe that from the beginning of the Canon till now a Providence has watched over it, and not only kept it in existence, but kept it from all serious corruption in passing through many hands and rude and troubled times; that is, kept it from all changes that would have marred its character as a religious rule for such beings as men; also, that during all this time God has been personally active in interpreting the Book, especially to all praying souls, “opening the understanding to understand the Scriptures,” and applying them as “the sword of the Spirit” to all classes. “Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world,” means at least a steady divine co-operation with ministers of the word from age to age.

Such is the testimony which the Bible gives of itself. Certainly a great testimony. The outward seeming of the Book is that of any other book. No aureole plays about it; the characters within are such as mere types and

ink can give; no radiant hand let down from heaven visibly passes it from house to house and from person to person; and yet it is one of the greatest divine works visible in all the earth. It contains within itself an army of divine actions. It is environed and carried forward by an army of divine auxiliaries. On its path among men is gathered more divine interest and a greater measure and variety of divine forces than gather about the orbits of planets and suns. As the chariot in which salvation rides to a lost race; as the pillar that shows the journeying nations how to cross the "great and terrible wilderness;" as the permanent yet moving Shekinah for Jews and Gentiles, whence the voice of the Lord speaks infallible oracles; as the great lens which brings to a brilliant focus far more than the scattered rays of tradition, conscience, reason and nature,—it really has no fellow among all the useful and precious things that meet our eyes as they go ranging through the world. This is claimed of several books—is *true* for only one. And this one is not the Zendavesta, nor the Vedas, nor the Koran, nor some other on which is written the name of Confucius or Mormon or Swedenborg—purely human the best of them, insane or diabolical the worst of them: it is the Book that incarnates the Christian religion. A divine

pulse is in every verse, and every verse is being charioted toward its own particular uses by a discriminating Providence that makes no mistakes.

What a Book! It is a quiver full of golden arrows that God himself has wrought, and which his eye and hand are sending out to their various destinations more critically than ever did consummate Tell poise and strain shaft on string. It is a ship sailing toward us out of the dawn, embosomed in a phosphorescent ocean, driven steadily on to its port by sacred gales and currents, and picking up on this hand and on that wrecked mariners as it ploughs its golden furrow.

#### 10. MORAL WONDERS.

All men now are conscious of a certain working within them in opposition to courses of sin and folly. Usually this opposition is felt for years. Sometimes it strengthens into a strong wrestling, and the soul is strained and bruised and torn as if at the hands of a gladiator. We may not say that no natural forces are concerned in this holy gladiatorship—we know the contrary—but yet it is certain that just this sort of work is attributed in the Bible to God. He strove with the antediluvians, until he at last said, "My Spirit shall not al-

ways strive with man." He strove with the Israelites in all their generations, until Stephen said, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye." And from that time till now the striving has continued with the whole world, for the Saviour says, "He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment." Such passages have compelled the current belief of Christians that, even as good men never content themselves with indirect and occasional resistance of wrong courses in others, but also, according to their power, act directly and habitually for that purpose, so no doubt the striving of the Holy Ghost with wrong in every man and in every age includes one that is personal and habitual—all the more certainly because God, unlike man, is not to be wearied or embarrassed by any amount or variety of action.

In the case of many persons these divine strivings issue in another divine work—viz. *regeneration*. Character and life are radically changed. The sinner finds himself penitent and believing. Somehow, he thinks differently, feels differently, acts differently. He has come into hearty sympathy with the divine government, and is resolute to obey its laws and promote its ends. And yet only a few hours ago it was *so* different—perhaps fiercely



and almost hopelessly different. But now "old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

A new thing under the sun? By no means. Such stars have always been coming out in the jet of our sky. Adam and Eve, we hope, had that starry experience. We know that Abel had it. And, from that first martyr downward, good men have never been totally wanting—patriarchs, prophets, apostles, saints, of whom time would fail me to tell—and each of these men became good by experiencing, once upon a time, just that moral revolution of which I have spoken. And now many thousands of such revolutions occur every year. The thousands will grow to millions as the years roll on kindling wheels through dawn and sunrise toward the perfect day. The noon itself will be made by these starry experiences becoming so closely packed together as to make a sun.

Whence are these, from first to last, innumerable regenerations? Christians have but one answer. They are compelled to uniformity by the clear and manifold Scripture utterances. Faith is the gift of God. Jesus is the author, as well as finisher, of it. "Create within me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me," says David. Christians are the "wheat sown by the great Sower—his

workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus, born of the Spirit, renewed of the Holy Ghost." That such language means a real divine action, and one of the most commanding sort, no reasonable man can doubt, especially in view of the fact that we are directed to *pray* for the conversion of men.

In addition to these divine acts for the conversion of men there are also others for their *sanctification*. Some men grow in grace. They go from strength to strength. The dawn shines more and more toward the perfect day. Their faith gets stronger, their conscientiousness deepens; their obedience gradually takes on the ease and fixedness of habit. The young banyan widens and heightens, sends down rootlets from every branch, makes filial stems on every hand, promises in time to become a pillared temple of the forest. How many forms of virtue belong to a single finished Christian character! and how many increments each of these takes on in the course of years under as many impulses of the growth-making forces! How many of these complex, banyan-like sanctifications in the world, from first to last, between Adam on the one hand and the Church universal in its white millennial robes on the other!

The Bible being witness, all the virtues that have ever adorned the world; all the improve-

ments made in these virtues, even such as men have wrought at as laboriously as ever did lapidary at cutting and polishing and setting a gem; all the finished jewels of character that will finally be found flashing on the persons of that multitude that no man can number as they pass through the gates into the city—must be credited to God. They are “fruits of the Spirit.” “My Father is the husbandman,” and he prunes and “purges the tree that it may bring forth more fruit.” “Through sanctification of the Spirit;” “changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord;” “knowing that it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure,”—how outspoken and decisive are these gleams of the biblical philosophy! So the whole Christian Church has felt constrained to allow that in the “every good and perfect gift that is from above” is this supreme gift of sanctification—that, inspiring, directing and working with the human lapidary as he toils away on the precious stone to fit it for a crown, there is another Hand, so much more skillful, diligent and efficient than his own that we are bound to say, “Thou, O Lord, hast wrought all our work in us.”

Prayer in its very nature is largely an appeal to God to *do* something. Such appeals have been made from the beginning. From the be-

ginning God has invited them, encouraged them by great promises, put on record many brilliant examples of their success in calling forth divine activity; so that every believer knows, independently of observation, that countless millions of petitions from devout men for objects known to be always and everywhere agreeable to the divine will and consistent to be granted (for example, spiritual blessings for the petitioner himself) have been answered by appropriate movements of divine power all adown the ages. But there are many cases in which prayers are so circumstantially fulfilled before our eyes that we know, aside from Scripture, that the divine Hand *must* have been concerned in them. The occasional experience of almost every praying man, the records of noted prayer-meetings, and especially the continuous histories of such Christian institutions as Müller's at Bristol, England, where daily bread (none too little and none too much) for thousands is gotten by daily prayer, are witnesses. Could we collect all the examples of such circumstantially fulfilled prayer as no doctrine of chances or of blind law can explain that occur in a single year all over Christendom, they would be found to make a very great total—something not easily counted, something to be astonished at—and such have been occurring every year, not to say every hour,

since man began, sometimes in constellations. As the conditions of acceptable prayer will be more and more freely supplied as the world goes on toward its Golden Age, these brilliant examples will go on multiplying, till at last the earth is ablaze with the time when "it shall come to pass that before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear."

But some one reminds us that there is a theory which provides for answers to prayer—as well as for an infinity of other things—by only a *single* divine action. At the creation, God, contemplating all the events which both could and should be, so framed the system of nature that, without any further action from him, it would itself produce these events at the proper time and place. One comprehensive act at the beginning made unnecessary any further divine action. So that from then till now God has not once lifted his hand.

According to this notion, no doubt, the divine government would be just as real and present as if a distinct divine action were immediately connected with each event. If Dom Pedro, emperor of Brazil, proposes to travel for a year in foreign countries, and succeeds in making arrangements in advance by which, during that time, all the needs of the empire will be as well met as if he had remained at

home and daily attended to all the details of kingly work, his government by no means ceases when he embarks. But is this really the way in which God governs? Then he has made an *alter ego*. Then mere nature wrought all the miracles of the Old and New Testaments, including his descent on Sinai and his greater descent on Calvary. Then it is possible for God to make a system of second causes that can go on untended for ages, doing the entire work of Deity, save perhaps that of creating; and we have but to suppose such a system eternal (just as easy a supposition as that of an eternal God) to get rid of all philosophic need of a God; nay, in such a case one is forbidden by the inductive philosophy to explain such a nature by the hypothesis of a God.

Of course the whole drift of Scripture is against this clock-winding scheme. Plainly, it never once entered the thought of the sacred writers, unless as a part of the "oppositions of science, falsely so called." The impression left on the most careful as well as the most careless reader of the Bible is that nature is not a machine so wisely built that it can go on of itself, turning out as good results as both nature and the supernatural together could do, but that God is continually active in the system, meeting its current needs by the current outgoes of his

watchful almightiness. He never embarks for foreign parts. He never puts a viceroy into his throne.

This conception of the divine government is far more useful than the other, as it brings God nearer our thought and life, and is therefore presumably correct; especially as it is just as easy for an infinite Being to act daily, and even momentarily, as to act once in a million of years.

#### II. MIRACLES.

In addition to the divine actions already mentioned, there have been certain others in connection with events, for the present sufficiently described by the name of the "Scripture Miracles."

That God has, from time to time, put forth his hand to produce such miracles is far from being incredible, apart from revelation. The air of all times and countries is quick with rumors of supernatural occurrences. We meet everywhere echoes which might well have been born of the most wonderful voices, everywhere odors which might well have come from the distant swaying of royal robes.

Nay, as we have seen, there are events taking place even now which, to say the least, it is very hard to bring clearly within the class of the purely natural. Are we never at a loss to

see how mere animal parentage can account for the bodies and souls that are constantly being born, to see how it is possible for anything in the way of mere nature to produce its own equal? Is there not very considerable reason for believing that the long stretch of organic life on our globe has been many times broken and as many times renewed by that greatest of marvels, a sudden creation?

And, then, what a fitting basis would miracles be to such a system of religion as the biblical! A grand palace should have a grand foundation, a great monarch should be preceded by no common herald. Whatever else may be denied as to the religion of the Bible, it cannot be denied that it is great. It seeks the greatest objects, works by the greatest means, and claims some of the greatest ideas and literature and effects the world ever saw. Its purpose is the salvation of mankind. It offers to secure this purpose by a divine atonement and by a constant miracle of renewal and sanctification in the hearts of men through the Holy Spirit. It would be a fitness—such a fitness as nature loves, and such as we intuitively recognize as belonging to truth—were this great temple fronted with a porch of signs and wonders. It would be a graceful harmony—like the accords in music or the symmetries of physical



beauty—were this pure and lofty faith of Christendom found poisoning itself, in part at least, on such a foundation of great and precious stones as the marvels that transcend nature.

But some are disposed to object. They tell us that such marvels have never been needed, and so have never occurred; that an infinite Being could have so made the scheme of things as to secure all his ends by natural forces and laws alone; that He who is admitted to have secured by such means a large part of his ends could, with omnipotence and omniscience to help him, have managed to secure the remainder. We happen, however, to know that not even an infinite Being can work impossibilities in the nature of things, and that among these impossibles may well be that of securing from mere nature as complete results as might come from nature and the supernatural together.

They tell us that such marvels, in their very nature, are amendments—mere supplements and patches to eke out a faulty system—attempts to correct what is too long or too short, too fast or too slow, too weak or too strong; in short, such a thing as could never have come from a perfect Being. I happen, however, to know that great deeds are not necessarily afterthoughts. They may enter into the original plan of their author with all smaller mat-

ters. And why may not such marvels as I have mentioned have entered into a great primal plan of creation which was never for a moment supposed to be complete without them? In their nature they are no more amendments than a pendulum is an amendment to a clock or a roof to a house. Did not the maker from the first propose the whole?

Above all, they tell us that such events are contrary to experience. I happen, however, to know some things in the way of science that make light of such an objection. Grant that such events are aside not only from our own personal experience, but also from that of all our predecessors for some thousands of years. What then? Does it follow that they have never occurred, or even that they cannot be known with scientific sureness to have occurred? Nothing of the sort. We certainly know of real geological wonders which have never once been observed actually occurring during the entire history of our race thus far; we certainly know of real astronomical wonders sure to occur after many ages, but of which all previous human history will not have seen a solitary instance, but rather constant facts of directly the opposite bearing. For example, many ages hence the moon will begin to recede from the

earth. That will be an event totally unprecedented in the history of mankind. Nay, it will be an event directly the opposite of what has always been occurring. From long before man, down to that remote future, the moon, instead of retreating from the earth, will have been steadily approaching it; and were the race of that distant time to reason merely from what has been within its time to what will be on the morrow, it would confidently say that the satellite will be still approaching. But it would be a mistake. On that very morrow the lunar orbit will begin to expand—will do a thing which no man in all the ages has ever observed it doing, and, what is more, will do a thing which, with the help of a little astronomy, those men might have foreknown with supreme certainty. We foreknow it with supreme certainty to-day, thanks to the great observations of Halley and the greater mathematics of La Place.

Now, what neither science nor tradition nor the fitness of things forbids us to believe in we find imposed on our faith by the Scriptures. They tell us that the Hebrews saw ten general plagues sent on Egypt through the rod of Moses; that by it a way was opened through the Red Sea for a whole marching nation until from the farther bank they saw the crystal walls fall on the pursuing army of the Egyptians;

that a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night led the pilgrim host for forty years; that during this long time their clothing waxed not old and their daily bread came daily from heaven; that, on their coming to Sinai, God came down on the mount in foretold majesty of lightnings and thunders and earthquakes, and spake his law in awful proclamation that sounded through all the marshaled millions, and carried dismay through all their hearts. Many other events of a similar nature are found described in the Old Testament.

In the New Testament we find a record of a similar but still more illustrious cluster of wonders. It tells us that God himself became incarnate in the person of a babe; that a host of angels appeared to the shepherds of Bethlehem and sang gloriously of the nativity; that a star, moving as if instinct with intelligence, guided a caravan from the East to the infant King; that, as he was being baptized, a voice fell from heaven on the ears of thousands gathered from all parts of the country, saying, "This is my beloved Son;" that promptly, at the speaking of a word or the lifting of a finger or some other sign equally insufficient as cause, the blind received sight, the lame walked, the deaf heard, the dumb spake, the lepers were cleansed, the paralytics took up their beds and walked, the

madmen became sane, the sick were cured of whatever disease they had, the very dead were raised ; that at the crucifixion of Jesus the whole land was darkened and shaken ; that a terrible angel flashed down from heaven in sight of the Roman guard about the sepulchre ; that the Messiah rose from the dead and was seen forty days among his apostles, and on one occasion by more than five hundred disciples ; that he rose to heaven in broad day in sight of the Eleven ; that these men themselves received the gift of tongues and the power of working miracles, and wrought them for years over a wide extent of country.

Beyond question, the Scriptures represent such events as due to direct divine action. From the very nature of the case, some of these, such as the descent of the Deity on Sinai and the incarnation, were supernatural ; but the same supernatural origin is claimed by the Scriptures for the whole body of such marvels.

This claim breathes from the whole texture and atmosphere of the narrative. It is its fundamental postulate. It is true that some persons maintain that while the Bible is, in general, trustworthy both as to doctrine and fact, and even came from God, its so-called miracles were merely very unusual and strik-

ing natural events, produced wholly by secondary forces and laws. But, to any fair-minded reader of the Bible, this claim is too absurd to merit the least attention. It is abundantly plain that the sacred writers *meant* to have us understand that such marvels as have just been mentioned were not exceptional natural events, but were wrought directly by the finger of God. And so they have been understood by unsophisticated people in every age.

Now, notice the exceeding number, variety and greatness of these divine interventions, also the exceeding evidence that accompanied them.

Many scores of these are distinctly recorded; and we are told that the New-Testament miracles are merely samples of a much larger number. See what breadth of statement: "And his fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those that were possessed with devils, and those that were lunatic, and those that had the palsy, and he healed them." Similar statements are several times made as to the miracles of both Jesus and his apostles. It appears that the whole land was filled with marvels. They overflowed into surrounding countries. They lasted for the best part of a century. They

counted by thousands and tens of thousands. They lightened in city and on country-side. They flashed on the eyes of nobles and commoners, of learned and simple. Scarcely a hamlet into which they did not go. Scarcely a man who did not have opportunity, over and over again, of examining them personally with all his senses. Their heavy footfall was heard near every door; the family had but to open and look and listen. It would, of course, have paid a Jew to push a pilgrimage to Gaul or Britain to come into the presence of such superb events, but they came to greet him in his own streets, and he had but to follow the crowd, or to climb the sycamore, or to ask the eye-witness of yonder dwelling, in order to have evidence of them as triumphant as the mathematics.

We are so familiar with this story that we are apt to miss a sense of its exceeding greatness. It is easy for us to read without emotion the oft-read account of the Nain widow's son or of Lazarus bewailed of sisters; but could we actually stand by the bier which is trembling with the throes of resurrection, or by the cave whence swaddled death comes promptly forth at the word of command, we would hardly be able to keep back our exclamations of wonder and awe. We must try to transfer ourselves

to those distant times. We should gather about ourselves, in idea, the living circumstances under which Almightyness is said to have stepped forth to its work. We should, as it were, hear with our own ears the inadequate utterance and the hot tramp of the mighty result. Thus would our dull conceptions be roused and empowered as was that ancient Gennesaret when the storm came down upon it. Looking as through our own eyes, we would better take in the hugeness of those marvels, so simply set before us in the Scriptures, as they tell of lame men leaping as the hart; dumb tongues singing; deaf ears waking up to a gospel of sweet sounds and the voices of kindred; blind eyes that had rolled sightless from birth drinking in with passionate joy the bright aspects of nature and the loving looks of parents and children; dead bodies in which decay had already begun to proclaim itself quickened anew with the mystery of life and soul, and going forth among men with the old potential step of manhood in its prime—as they tell of such events forthspringing with glorious promptitude at the feeblest natural signal, and with a profusion and overtness that spoke to the whole land and age.

What supreme *evidence* accompanied the lead-



ing Scripture miracles! They were not done in a corner. The entire Hebrew nation of Moses' day must have known perfectly whether the Mosaic miracles were real or not. They could not have passed forty years in such a wonderful experience without knowing it. And they could not have been without such a forty years' experience without knowing that too to a perfect certainty. If no such plagues were ever wrought for their deliverance, they knew they were never wrought. If they never went through the Red Sea as on dry land, every soul of them knew that they never did. If they had not been led by that intelligent pillar for nearly half a century, they all, to a man, knew that they had not been. If they had never bowed and quaked before a bowing and quaking Sinai, not a Hebrew of them all but knew it like noonday. If they had not been fed by daily miracle for a lifetime, they all, without exception, knew that to absolute demonstration. In short, the chief Mosaic miracles were of such a nature that the senses of every man, woman and child among the Hebrews could judge of them infallibly.

So of the leading *Christian* miracles. Largely, Jesus allowed the whole world to look on while he wrought. It is broad day. Gather the wise and the learned; gather the men of theory

and the men of affairs ; gather the unsophisticated and the prejudiced, the devout and the worldly, the populace and the counselors ; let them all come and sift this matter to the bottom. So they came—the scholarly rabbi in all the pride of learning ; the honorable ruler in all the pride of place ; the bitter enemy with his sharp outlook for imposture ; the proud Pharisee drawing his robes more closely about him lest they should touch the shamefaced publican at his side ; the Sadducee with his free-thinking ; the Essene with his dreamy intuitions—in a word, the great public in all its grades and opinions and habits. And there, on the thronged thoroughfare, they looked and listened as blind Bartimeus regained his sight. There, at the city-gate, they looked and listened as the dead man sat up and began to speak. There, at the crowded city-house, they looked and listened while the roof was broken up and the palsied man was let down before Jesus and cured. And there, at Calvary, with its unspeakable martyrdom and surging seas of people, they looked and listened and felt as night came up at midday and the ground shook beneath them at the majestic tread of the earthquake.

And where the miracles were done only in the presence of the twelve disciples, they were

largely such that those disciples could not have been mistaken as to their reality and divine origin. The evidence was supreme. Could they help knowing that the violent storm on the Sea of Galilee was instantaneously quieted at the bidding of their Master? Did they not know, by every sense they had, whether a living Jesus was among them for forty days after he had been pronounced dead by the grand coroners of Judea and Rome? Did they not know whether they saw Jesus rising through the day into heaven, and whether, thereupon, they saw an angel standing among them in white robes and telling of the second coming? Especially, did they not know whether they themselves possessed the power of working miracles, and whether they actually wrought them in great numbers and splendor for many years? Those twelve men could not possibly have been mistaken as to the reality of any one of these miracles, much less as to the reality of thousands of them, occurring under every variety of form and illuminating a whole lifetime. Just as ancient Israel must have known to absolute certainty, at the merest glance, that no such forty years of miraculous experience as Moses wrote of had happened to them in case it had not, so those Christian apostles knew perfectly that no such gorgeous caravan of miraculous

years as they wrote of had borne them along in triumphal march in case it had not.

The evidence attending the Christian miracles was so great that it bred a magnificent faith in the primitive Christians. How like profound believers do the Evangelists write! What charming directness, simplicity and general air of good faith in their narratives! What faithfulness in recording their own crudities, mistakes and sins! Truly they were consummate actors if they were merely feigning faith. Never did Roscius or Garrick so admirably personate kings. And then see how they lived and died. It is agreed on all hands by the traditions and histories that the apostles who lost their Master by crucifixion passed their own lives in labors, dangers and sufferings in attestation of the same miraculous story, and at last endured, most of them, martyrdom for the same; and all with no possibility of any such result to themselves (such was the pure and spiritual nature of the system of religion which they taught) as alone could beckon on selfish and unprincipled men to undertake such sacrifices. They had been with Jesus through all his troublous ministry. They had seen him crucified. He had predicted just such a stormy life and fate for themselves; and they tell us that from the beginning of their separate mission they had

expected the fulfillment of that prediction. Indeed, the very circumstances and temper of the time must have given to the dullest observer assurance of the utmost trouble to all missionaries of the new faith. Yet the apostles went forward. They went forward with steady feet and unsparing tongue to meet the scowling populace, the infuriated rulers, the bigotry of the Jew and scorn of the Greek, want, stonings, chains, scourgings, prisons, wild beasts, crucifixions, infamy; in short, to receive in their faces the fiercest wind and sleet and volleys of ill-will, outrage and death. And when they actually met and were enveloped by the storm, did their courage fail them? Did they shrink and give way, and finally disappear humbly within the old synagogues and temples? Nothing daunted those witnesses. They went on witnessing to the end. At last they resolutely sealed their witnessing with their blood. By all the laws of evidence, and by all the light of experience and history, they must have most thoroughly believed in the miracle-founded system which they taught.

But this is not all. The evidence of the Christian miracles was so overwhelming that they were believed in by the whole land as well as by the apostles. It was the general confession, "This man doeth many miracles;" "That

a notable miracle has been done by them is manifest to all that dwell at Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it." After the Christian age was fairly begun it does not seem to have occurred to the Jews to question the reality of the miracles of Jesus and his disciples. They only questioned their proceeding from GOD. They ascribed them to Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. They said it was magic that did them. So say the Talmud and all the literatures assailing Christianity that have come down to us from the earlier centuries. Neither Celsus, nor Porphyry, nor Hierocles, nor Julian ever denied the miracles; they only denied the divine origin of them. No defender of Christianity in the earlier times ever tried to prove the miracles; he always took them for granted, and confined himself to showing that they must be from God. Their reality was universally confessed. And a hostile nation, a nation fiercely bitter against Christianity and seeking every pointed weapon against it, would never have confessed the Christian miracles genuine unless it had been compelled by an astounding majesty and abundance of evidence.

Such were the Scripture miracles. Wonderful in their intrinsic greatness, and also in the greatness of the evidence by which they took captive the faith of vast populations! Wonder-

ful, also, in number and variety, especially in the time of Jesus and his apostles! As magnificent princes on some high festival stand and scatter gold among the people with a full hand, so magnificently stood Messiah the Prince and sowed out over the land his shining largess as out of the fullness of a heavenly treasury. It was a golden rain. The great firmament seemed broken up and all its stars falling. City and country were gay with the mighty spangles. "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain [endure] the books that should be written."

Wonderful events from almost every point of view, but specially wonderful as being flashing interjections in current human affairs of a divine Hand.

## 12. A MARVELOUS HISTORY.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

The earth, "without form and void," he gradually fitted up for an abode of living things—plants, brutes, men.

When the preparation was complete he willed into being the world's inhabitants—first, the endless wonders of vegetable life over all the lands,

and even in the waters; second, the endless wonders of the lower orders of animals that swim in the deep, fly in the air and walk or creep on the ground or within it; last, man, the viceroy and image of God.

For this king he made a companion queen. He placed them in a delightful garden eastward in Eden which he had specially prepared for them; gave them, at first hand, most simple and reasonable regulations, and ample motives for complying with them; added the safeguard and privilege and glory of angelic, and even of divine, society and counsels.

But, despite these counsels and all that the Hand could consistently do, in an evil hour Adam and Eve were persuaded into sin by the dragon, "that old serpent which is the devil, and Satan which deceiveth the whole world," and so were driven forth in shame and sorrow from the Paradise to which they had become unfitted, and became the parents of a race sinful and unhappy like themselves.

For several generations the lives of men were very different affairs from our present lives. They had some length to them. They gave one a brave chance to get something done. Were wildernesses to be subdued, cities built, kingdoms founded, arts and sciences thought out?—there was a plenty of time for



everything before night. The sun rose and climbed and circled about the zenith as in an Arctic day; would it *ever* set? Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years, Methusaleh nine hundred and sixty-nine, and none of the men of that period whose names have come down to us fell far short of these ages. Ah, those were grand orbits! Those were lives worth living! Just think of it! Nine centuries and more—*little immortalities!* A man was still dewy and lithe with early youth at an age when now he would be an infirm old man supporting his trembling steps with a staff.

“There were giants on the earth in those days.” Tradition points in the same direction—from those among the Arabs who profess to show the graves of Adam and Noah, a hundred feet long, to those among the Greeks and Romans who tell of the Titans, vast sons of the Earth and the Sky, and almost equal to gods in strength. In the same direction, also, points the fact that the earlier individuals of the leading fossil species of brute animals have been the larger and more perfect. The prodigious vitality and physical completeness expressed in such long lives strongly favor the same view. Altogether, does it not seem probable that if some geologist, in the course of his prying among the strata, should uncover

the skeleton of a primitive man, he would be astonished at the great bones that proclaim himself a pigmy?

Men abused the great forms and prodigious lives which their Maker still allowed them. How much good a man could do and get in the course of nine centuries! To what heights of virtuous habit might he not climb! But then to what depths of badness and hardness might he not sink! A sinner now, who has been hardening for the better part of a single century, is flint: what of the sinner who has been hardening nine times as long? Such were the original sinners. Men became awfully and almost universally wicked. "All flesh corrupted its way." The good were reduced to a single small household. The more men departed from God, the more they departed from each other. Brother rose against brother. "The earth was filled with violence;" "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thought of his heart was only evil continually." These are strong words. One almost stands aghast at the picture of depravity, disorder and outrageous crime which they call up.

Was God inactive while men were getting so high-handed? That is incredible. Even good men cannot rest without striving against the

vices and follies of their times—much less could the good God. So his Spirit strove with man. He strongly wrestled and fought with the growing wickedness. Perhaps he now and then struck down suddenly, as with a bolt, some daring ringleader. Perhaps he sent to them warning dreams and visions. Perhaps a divine voice, or angels on rainbow wings, broke in with remonstrances on their oaths and revelleries and profligacies. Certainly, God sounded trumpets in their consciences—inwardly suggesting, inviting, warning, persuading, instructing—even as he now “convinces of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.” As certain are we that he foretold to them a dreadful fate in case they did not repent, limited them to a probation of one hundred and twenty years, and remonstrated with them both by the words and deeds of Noah, the preacher of righteousness.

But all in vain. God was almighty and all-wise, but then the contest was a *moral* one, in which, if possible, men were to be won from wickedness by their fears and hopes and consciences; and in this moral wrestling the victory was with the weaker side. God was defeated. Wickedness came off with flying colors. The world remained as bad as ever—nay, grew worse. Sinners, awful with the hardness and

inveteracy of a wicked millennium, were teaching the new generations to be worse than themselves. What must be done?

God must act again. He has tried to govern by his law: now he must govern by his sword. He has threatened that unless men amend he will destroy them. Of course such threats must be fulfilled. The long moral striving on the part of God must now give place to another sort of divine activity—the activity of power and justice and wrath. So he gave notice to the one good family in all the earth (so bad was the state of things) to build an ark for itself; for, was he not about to drown the whole race of rebels as an intolerable and irreclaimable nuisance, and to wash clean again the dirty and stenchful world with his avenging floods? How the ark was to be built—how large, how shaped, of what materials, what occupants it should have,—all were matters of express divine appointment. The axes rang, the hammers sounded, the great structure slowly grew, and, for the hundred and twenty years during which it went on toward completion, Noah preached righteousness more loudly, perhaps, with his hands than with his voice, and God continued to strive.

At last the ark is done. *Enter*, said the voice of God to Noah and his family. *Enter*, said the power of God to representatives of every sort

of land animals. Then God shut them in, shut the rebels out. Probation finished. Grow black the heavens. Hark to the muttering thunder! Is that the rush and roar of distant winds? CRASH! and a red bolt leaps like a bloody dagger out of the angry clouds at the ghastly earth. And in the glare are seen ghastly people standing at their doors and on house-tops, looking terror into each other's eyes. Was that a drop of rain? Yes; hearken now to the patter. And now it pours, *pours*, POURS, as if the very sky itself were turning to water. The solid strata burst with the sound of thunder. Great seams open everywhere, through which leap up unnumbered geysers. Down the hill-sides rush the torrents, roaring and tearing through gorges and ravines. Now the smaller streams overflow their banks; now the rivers, spurred by ten thousand unwonted tributaries, rush like mad coursers to the sea. And the sea itself has to-day a tide that ebbs not—high above high-water mark, above spring and neap, above the highest that the oldest inhabitant ever made or knew—still on and on, day after day, until the land has become an archipelago, a wreck-covered sea, up through which pierce the hills as so many islands, all black with people; and the great ark loosens from its place on the mountain-side and floats mutely

by the crowds of imploring, drowning wretches who have at last discovered that there is a God. At length the last peak disappears. A single rebel left? Not one. The world is drowned. The ark, freighted with the seed of a new dispensation, is the only thing to be seen on all that wide avenging ocean.

See what the Hand has done! Whether the axis of the earth was altered or its diurnal revolution suddenly suspended, or some disorderly sphere, roving near the earth, drew the waters toward itself and heaped the oceans on the land, or floods of water freshly created for the occasion arose to judgment—who knows? But this we know, that in whatever way the work was done, it was done according to express prediction and by a direct act of divine sovereignty and power as a judgment on sin: as when a human monarch bids his armies march, and marches himself at their head with flashing sword, to overwhelm his enemies and lay waste their country. Such is the Scripture account; it purports to be history—has always been received as such—is naturally understood as such by all unsophisticated people.

The same Hand that let loose the avenging floods removed them when their work was done. It held back the rains. It sealed up the fountains. It made a thirsty wind to blow

across the waters and drink them insatiably. And at last the same divine voice that bade Noah enter his ark bade him go out to possess a new world.

So the race began anew, from a pious stock. Anew men multiplied, grew wicked, spread themselves westward on the plains of Shinar. Here they set to work to build a great city and sky-piercing tower. Exactly how much wickedness they meant by this is not clear, but they seem at least to have been inspired by pride and presumption and a wish to prevent the dispersion of men over the earth according to the divine plan. Their heaven-climbing tower should be seen from afar and be a rallying-point for the fast-spreading multitudes. Their grand city should be a powerful magnet to keep the straying peoples together. They meant concentration—God meant diffusion. They meant the pride and power and condensed wickedness of a great metropolis—God meant the comparative simplicity and purity and healthfulness and freedom of rural life and of a scattered population. And the meaning of God triumphed. For his hand was lifted, and smote, not the bodies of those presumptuous builders, but their language. Hitherto all had been of one speech, but now, at the smiting of the Hand, the one flew into the many. The Arabic strove with

the Latin, the Hebrew with the Greek, and the Sanskrit with all. It was jargon. It was babel. One group of workmen did not understand another. "What *do* they mean? Are they mocking us?" So perplexity, impatience, suspicions, alienations and exasperations arose. The builders ceased to build, they drew apart. In this simple way their unity was broken up, and it became impossible for them to plan and act in concert as they had been wont to do. Instead of walls rising *around* them, walls arose *between* them. A centrifugal force was secured, under the steady action of which they went forth in all directions the more rapidly to people the earth; became distinct clans, tribes, nations, manageable bodies for civil government, serving as checks on each other in courses of violence and ambition, prompting to many healthful competitions; sometimes scourging each other for sin in God's behalf and as his unconscious ministers.

Just how suddenly this diversity of languages was brought about we are not told. But we are given to understand, in the whole structure of the narrative, that when brought about it was not by the mere working of natural causes, such as now tend to change languages and such as have made the English of a few centuries ago almost unintelligible to us. God himself



took the matter directly in hand. The Hand hurried through what else had been the work of centuries, if not in a moment or a day, at least in a less time than was necessary to build a city of brick, materials all at hand. It was a case of the supernatural. The same divine power that equipped man at his start with a language as full grown as his body (instead of leaving him to find his way to it by the slow process of gradual invention and accumulation of minute improvements), by a similar right-handed sovereignty started into being other languages full grown. They were propagated by fission, if you please, but the fission took place not naturally, but by the smiting of a divine Hand.

In the dispersion from Babel did Ham and his descendants stream off to Africa, Japhet and his descendants to Europe, Shem and his to the four winds in Asia? Did this tribe settle in Mesopotamia, that in Egypt, this in Phœnicia, that in the land of Sinim? Where each new tongue found a home and founded a state, thither it went, not as chance would have it, or the enforcings of mere natural circumstance, but as the unseen Hand constrained. "He made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed and *the bounds of their*

*habitation.*” This passage is not found in a poem, but in a speech of Paul to the Athenians. Very likely nothing beyond the conveniences, needs and passions of men, nothing beyond considerations of soil and climate, of rivers and mountains, of friends and enemies, was visible at the time as influencing the settlement of new regions; but the Scripture takes us behind the scenes to see the hand of God digging the channels and directing into them the streams of emigration—settling the Arabs in their deserts, the Greeks in Greece, the Romans in Italy, the Slaves in Russia, the Germans about the Rhine, the Britons in their island-home—in short, decreeing the whereabouts and times of every nation, past and present. All in harmony with that broader teaching, that “the Most High rules in the kingdoms of men, gives them to whomsoever he will, increases the nations and destroys them, enlarges the nations and straitens them again.”

Among the earlier settlements of the world was that in the fertile vale of Siddim. Here were built seven towns, the leading ones being Sodom and Gomorrah. Wicked, wicked Sodom and Gomorrah! The very names smut our pages. “Pride, fullness of bread and abundance of idleness,” as too often happens, went

on to dissipation and abominableness; and at last the nuisance became intolerable even to the long-suffering God. So he sent his angels, led out of the doomed plain the one righteous man and his family, and then rained fire and brimstone out of heaven till the whole region about was one sea of fire. Died the sinners, perished the cities; some fancy that a Dead Sea moaning over the polluted sites is for ever trying to wash them clean and for ever proclaiming by its ever-nauseous floods the impossibility of the task.

Did some sudden volcano spout sulphurously through the air? Did the hot simoom of the desert raise aloft the dry brimstone dust of Siddim in clouds, and then ignite with its fiery breath both the clouds above and the bitumen-pits below? I do not know. But this I know, that in whatever way that fiery destruction came, and however many natural agencies were concerned in it, it was appointed and predicted and brought about by the direct personal action of the Almighty. By the same Hand the disobedient wife of Lot became a pillar of salt.

In Ur of the Chaldees dwelt a good man. This man was chosen by God to be the founder of a people having special privileges. They were to receive divine oracles. They were to

be an ark for the conservation of truth in rude and troublous times. They were to be brought into almost visible relations with God by signs and wonders and revelations. And among them, in process of time, should appear One in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. In point of religious privileges and opportunities they should excel all other nations, and if they would use their privileges well they should prosper outwardly beyond all others. But if they would abuse them their outward afflictions should also be beyond precedent. (See Deut. 28.) As was but reasonable: to whom much is given, of them may much properly be required.

In accordance with this plan, God said to Abram in some clear way, "Get thee out from thy country and from thy kindred, and come into the land that I shall show thee." So he came into the land of Canaan. And there he and his son and grandsons, for the most part, passed their days—every now and then favored with a communication of the divine will by a dream or an angel or a divine voice (not to say incarnation), as indeed all previous ages had been. A great-grandson of his was signally favored in the same way; and, through his faculty as a prophet, became prime minister of Egypt, the preserver of his race and the means

of their honorable settlement as citizens in the valley of the Nile.

In course of time the citizens became the slaves. At last God raised up a deliverer, commissioned him for his work by an audible voice, and clothed him with miraculous powers that he might bring his people out of their house of bondage. Portent after portent leaped sublimely from his rod. Plague after plague smote the oppressor. It was a scourge of ten thongs, and every thong evoked a wail through the whole land, from palace to hovel. "Let my people go," said the scourge as it whistled through the air; and lice and flies and hail and locusts and boils and murrain and blood and darkness and death in turn sought out every Egyptian house and spared every house of Israel. So at last the slaves became freedmen, and went out with a high hand and an outstretched arm. A pillar of cloud led their armies by day, and a pillar of fire by night. The Red Sea, cloven in twain, gave them dry passage while it drowned their pursuers. Down through the desert conducts the wondrous pillar—the pillar that can lighten and darken and talk. Every morn, save on the Sabbath, the bread of heaven lies about their camp like the dews. Rocks pour out water to quench their thirst. Birds offer themselves by millions to

meet their craving for flesh. Lo, Sinai! How it quakes and thunders and blazes! The pomp of God is on its brow, and an awful voice that affrights the millions pronounces to them the Ten Commandments. They were then twice written by the finger of God on tables of stone. In addition, a whole system of religious duties and observances, known to us as the "Mosaic Economy," was given to Moses in a way of direct personal communication. God talked with him face to face as a man talketh with his friend. A tabernacle, and priesthood, and oracle with its Urim and Thummim and Shekinah, and a picturesque array of types and shadows, were established. God took upon himself to be the civil Head of the nation. He made their government a glorious and unparalleled theocracy. Yet they grievously sinned. So his wrath came upon them and smote down the chosen men of Israel. They were bitten of fiery serpents. The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan and covered the company of Abiram. For forty years, as they were led up and down the wilderness by the supernatural pillar, their clothes waxed not old nor did their sandals fail them. For forty years they continued to take their daily bread out of God's right hand.

So at last they came to Canaan. Still the aureole of miracles continued—now about the

head of Joshua. "What ailed thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest, and Jordan, that thou wast driven back?" Not that the feet of priests just touched thy waves, but that the hand of thy Creator touched them. The walls of Jericho fell down flat before the besiegers. Was it their tramping about the city and the blowing of rams' horns—the prodigious dynamics of rams' horns—that did it? Those walls of stone trembled, shook, toppled, lay low, because the Hand was invisibly smiting them. "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon. So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven and hastened not to go down about a whole day." Wonderful! Did the power that did that feat—that stopped the rotation of the earth, or bent to a circle the hasty rays of light, or flooded the sky for twenty-four hours with the rays of a substitute sun—did that power belong to the voice of a man, or was it the power of God riding forth enthroned on the chariot of human speech?

So all along the course of the Old-Testament history, at intervals longer or shorter, events occurred for which no second causes can account, or which are so explicitly ascribed in Scripture to the supernatural that nothing short of infidelity itself can explain away the testimony. Prophets arose; oracles spoke;

deliverers were raised up; angels came with heavenly messages; battles were divinely gained or lost; dreams and visions taught men the will of Heaven; famines and plenties, sickness and health, came and went at a word; the shadow went back on the dial of Ahaz; "holy men of God spake" and wrote "as they were moved of the Holy Ghost;" a host became corpses in a single night,

"For the angel of death spread his wings on the blast,  
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;"

fire leaped from heaven at call to consume sacrifices, destroy wicked men and confound the worshipers of idols; "the mountain was full of chariots and horses of fire round about Elisha;" "women received their dead raised to life again;" men walked unharmed in the midst of a fiery furnace and in dens of hungry lions; a spectral hand wrote the doom of an empire on the wall; "time would fail me to tell of Gideon and of Barak and of Samson and of Jephthah, of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets, who through faith subdued kingdoms, . . . stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, . . . turned to flight the armies of the aliens." A man who can believe the Scripture and yet think that it does not teach, and mean to teach, the direct personal inter-



vention of God in these things at the time of them, but rather such poetical interventions as may be attributed to the *original* Author of nature and its forces, who, once for all, at the beginning, wound up the clock of centuries and nations, is a rationalist without reason, or at least without reasonableness. Such a believer is only a baptized infidel.

A peculiar people! Certainly, in respect to religious privileges and national opportunity. Never elsewhere on the planet did God so unveil his hand, so display his sceptre, to the eyes of men, so walk before them in the royalty of a visible theocracy. Never elsewhere were such promises made to obedience. The world should have an opportunity to see for themselves how correct is the common notion that if we could only stand face to face with the supernatural, could only live in the midst of an economy of glorious marvels in which God is almost *seen* in the act of royally governing, no one would be lacking in faith and obedience. A thorough experiment with the Hebrews, drawn patiently out through a thousand years and duly set down in imperishable records, should set the matter for ever at rest.

Surprising result! "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." The

earth rocked, the heavens blazed, the angels flew visibly athwart the blue on their wings of balm, the clouds and darkness thinned away from before the Hand till it became almost insufferably bright, and yet— Ah, what unbelief and perverseness! “Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye.” If one wants to know what the Hebrews would have been if they had done justice to their opportunities, let him read the first part of the twenty-eighth chapter of Deuteronomy. And if one wants to know what they actually turned out to be in their vexatious and unconscionable wickedness, let him read the predictions in the latter part of the same chapter, also profane history. Among the smallest of nations. In arts and arms and splendor and extent of territory utterly insignificant by the side of its neighbors, the great Assyrian, Egyptian, Persian, Macedonian and Roman empires. Leaving out of view the books which God himself dictated, the Hebrews had no literature to speak of. In national respectability and influence they have generally been the “tail, and not the head.” In scornings and humiliations and wide variety of suffering no people can pretend to equal them. And all because they were a peculiar

people—peculiarly favored with privileges and opportunities, and so peculiarly guilty in their sins, and so peculiarly chastised.

We come now to a time when the visible stream of supernaturalism, long directed specially toward the peculiar people, is seen broadening toward all nations. The Desire of all nations is at hand. After some four hundred years, in which signs and wonders have been withheld—as if for the purpose of making another outburst of them more impressive—a new dispensation dawns. God sends an angel to announce the supernatural birth of the forerunner of the Messiah; and then another angel to announce the miraculous birth of the Messiah himself. And who, now that he is come, is this rough-hewn John the Baptist, who never fears the face of clay? A prophet? “Yea, I say unto you; and more than a prophet.” And who, now that he is come, is this son of a virgin, foretold ages gone with minute circumstantiality? Hush! ask it only with bated breath, for the answer is one that to this day astonishes both earth and heaven. Behold God manifest in the flesh—in the flesh of a little child! Hitherto the world has had the supernatural Hand, now it has the whole supernatural Person. And is to have it for long years. No wonder that a golden cloud stoops

down through the night, dissolves into a host of radiant forms making august celebration; the shepherds of Bethlehem see midnight shining as the day on that unexampled wonder, the birth of God. And who are these hastening westward in long and travel-stained caravan? Star-led, dream-warned, God-summoned sages, representative men bringing the homage and tribute of the Gentile world to its Jewish King. Warned of God, his parents take him to Egypt; warned of God, they bring back and make him a Nazarene.

The first shower of the glorious rainy season that makes all things green. A lull. The years roll on as they will and must. The divine Child has become a divine Man; appears at Jordan under an open heaven from which settles upon him the Holy Ghost in visible form, also a heavenly voice that says, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." From this time a steady downpour of wonders which only the Hand can explain—wonderful teachings such as never came from other teachers, however famous; wonderful fulfillments of old prophecies; wonderful deeds of power as well as of knowledge, by which the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, storms cease at a word, the dead are raised, and (scarcely less wonderful, con-

sidering the times) the poor have the gospel preached to them. For three years the star-flakes descend till the land is galacteal with their glory. Then comes a greater glory still, a falling sun—God sacrificing himself for the sins of men, while the sky puts on mourning, the earth quakes with astonishment and horror and many bodies of sleeping saints arise. And then is seen a greater resurrection still. An angel flashes down and rolls away the stone from the door of the sepulchre. Forth comes the Crucified. “Handle me and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones as ye see me have.” And now behold him, defying gravity, rising through the air, lessening on the sight, at last disappearing in the far clouds. Ah, the King has come to his own again. And “he shall come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven,” break in two white-robed strangers standing suddenly among the rapt, up-gazing disciples. And he will.

Glorious incarnation, miracles, atonement, resurrection, and ascension! Instead of saying, “Lo, the hand of the King!” we say, “Lo, THE KING HIMSELF!”

Now that the sun is withdrawn, the planets can be seen. Look at the apostles shining with reflected light. Gathered in an upper

room, praying and waiting, waiting and praying, as believers still have to do. Lo, the sound of a rushing mighty wind! A fiery tongue rested on the head of each. And the tongue of each became a tongue of fire—swift, fervent, eloquent, wise, able to tell in any language the wonderful works of God. In a twinkling leaping far beyond Gamaliels and universities; swiftly qualified by the Sceptre for their work, better than any professors and seminaries could have qualified them in tedious drilling years; masters of speech toward the four winds,—see what it is to be empowered from on high! Jerusalem rushed to see. “Parthians and Medes and Elamites and the dwellers in Mesopotamia and Judea and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and in the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians,” came, saw, and were conquered. How could they resist that self-evidencing polyglot gospel? So three thousand of them submitted at once, and went their ways to their various countries with new faith and new hearts—of course trumpet on lip. How providential! For the purpose of a wide and swift diffusion of the gospel that first Christian revival at Jerusalem on the Pentecost could not have been more happily placed.

And it was soon found that the mantle of Jesus had fallen when he ascended. "In the name of Jesus." This name was to the apostles what the mantle of Elijah was to Elisha, what the rod of God was to Moses. It cast out devils. It healed the sick. It made the lame leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing. It unstopped deaf ears and gave the blind their sight. Nay, that supreme sign, the resurrection of the dead, was found not beyond its swift spell. Like the flaming sword that kept the tree of life, it turned every way. Like some grand yet simple astronomical formula, it seemed to hold wrapped up in itself all the works of God. The gift of tongues continued among the disciples at large. There were prophesyings and interpretations. Above all, there was a subtle convincing and persuading power going with the word spoken, that came not from the intrinsic force of the truth itself, nor from the eloquence and abilities of the speakers, nor from the signs and wonders offered in evidence of their doctrines, but from the direct action of the Spirit in removing prejudice, opening the understanding, subduing the will and renewing the heart. The direction of their journeys, the places they visited, the time of their stay, were suggested to the apostles by the Holy Ghost. Not only did God preside

over their spoken gospel, but he inspired several among the early disciples to put that gospel in writing for the benefit of after-times—"not in the words that man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

Then mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed. Converts came in crowds—not only in the Holy Land, but also in adjacent countries. This success was favored by some natural circumstances, such as the decadence of the old idolatries, the wide dominance of the tolerant Roman power and laws, the ease and safety of communication between all parts of the empire which Rome (law, order and road-builder as she was) secured, the general diffusion of the Greek language, the indefatigable zeal and labors of the primitive evangelists; but, on the other hand, were no small opposing circumstances in the Jewish origin of Christianity, in the Cross of its Founder, in the humble station of its apostles, and especially in its severe doctrine and morals. On the whole, little account is to be made of this or that friendly or unfriendly circumstance. The open secret of the apostolic triumphs was the *direct personal divine action* that was back of them. The wheels of Ezekiel's chariot ran because the Spirit of the Living One was in them. "Not by might, nor by power, but by



my Spirit." "The Lord working with them and confirming the word by signs following"—that simply tells the whole brilliant story.

As the first evangelists went from place to place with their conquering gospel they gathered those who accepted it into churches having sacraments, public worship, a definite creed, a discipline or government and a teaching ministry—as lies on the surface of the New Testament, and especially of the Acts of the Apostles. At the same time, they gradually laid aside the Mosaic economy as being a fulfilled system—shedding the limitations, wrinkles and ceremonies of the old national religion, and keeping only those vital elements which are always young and which fit it to all times and countries. All under the broad seal of their commission as apostles and by the guidance of that Holy Ghost whom their Master had plainly promised for their work. The Christian institutions thus founded came from the Hand as truly as did the miracles.

### *Dispersion of Jews.*

Then came the political ruin of the Jews. As a nation they had never accepted the gospel, and their unbelief was still crying, "His blood be on us and on our children!" It did not cry in vain. Jerusalem was compassed

with armies. Titus thundered at wall and gate; factions roared and fiercely fought within. Never was such a scene, never such suffering. A city? 'Twas Gèhenna. Not Jews held it, but demons. Not Sanhedrim governed it, but that grim triumvirate, Famine, Pestilence and Assassination. Brother stabs brother. Mothers have sodden their own babes. The air is putrid with corpses, and still more putrid with wickedness. Ah, it was "great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world; no, nor ever shall be." The storm beat pitilessly; there were thunderings and lightnings and quakings; the winds rioted and trumpeted and wrestled with all their might on tower and battlement. They fell. They fell on the nation. More than a million of people were crushed outright. The maimed survivors were mostly swept away to other lands—largely as slaves, and universally as objects of scorn, hatred and persecution. They had on them the mark of Cain; nevertheless, whoever killed them thought he was doing God service. And so it has continued down through bloody ages almost to our own times. Scattered and peeled, scouted and scourged alike by sovereign and serf, "dogs of Jews," at whom rabble children might cast stones unrebuked, "ground exceeding fine in

the mills of the gods," what people has fared like this? And with what strange result! Always dying, but never dead; always being exterminated, but never even sensibly diminishing. Always tossed from vessel to vessel, and fiercely stirred by sceptre and crozier and republican quarter-staff, and yet refusing to mix with the contents of any. Waifs and outcasts of the world, yet kept as in an ark; a Wandering Jew with unlimited faculty of being miserable, but without the faculty of dying; an island on all whose shores the surf is always breaking, sometimes with the onset of storms, but always breaking in vain, one wave bringing back what another has taken away.

Who destroyed Jerusalem? The Romans proudly thought they did, the Jews bitterly thought the same. And history, as commonly written, tells merely of the great commander, the invincible legions, the unity, discipline and confidence of men on the one side, and the division, disorder and despair of men on the other. But there was something back of all these—viz. the punitive sceptre of God. This was really busy in heaving down the walls of Jerusalem, as, in the fancy of the poet, the trident of Neptune was in casting down the walls of Troy. That disaster and the long train of disasters that followed, bush always

on fire but never consumed, was circumstantially foretold from the time of Moses—foretold as the penalty for wickedness. And Jesus had said with tearful eyes, "For the days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

#### *The Roman Victory.*

Up to about this time Christianity had fought unbelief with both moral and miraculous evidence. But now signs and wonders ceased. They could be appealed to as historic—indeed, as forming one of the surest as well as brightest departments in the treasure-house of the past—but henceforth men should not see with their own eyes the feats of Omnipotence. Enough of these had been granted to warrant faith in all time to come; to grant more would palsy wonder or aggravate condemnation. So miracles disappeared. Religion stood forth on the field of battle armed only with *moral* weapons—with history, the written Scriptures, uninspired preachers, the native force of truth, the Christian experience and life, a manifest supe-

riority to all other religions in purity and reasonableness and adaptation to the needs of men.

At this moment imperial paganism began to open its eyes. It had been tolerant; it had been wont to admit all gods to its Pantheon; besides, was not the new religion quite too small a matter to alarm the thrones, principalities and powers that swore by Olympus? But now the little one had become a thousand. Christians were found in all parts of the Roman empire, and, occasionally, in the very highest walks of life. It was found that the new system would not fellowship the old, but, on the contrary, firmly insisted on occupying the world alone. The old temples and altars were getting neglected. Priestly revenues and reverences were running short. The change was beginning to tell on even Pontifex Maximus and Cæsar. So Cæsar bestirred himself. He summoned to the battle all possible forces—prejudice, prestige, pomp of worship, art, literature, philosophy, social influence—above all, the *civil arm* in the shape of scourges, chains, dungeons, exiles, swords, crosses, ten general persecutions. On the other hand, Christianity opposed with patience, blameless living, fearless testimony, faithful preaching of the word, invincible constancy, joyful martyrdoms. And these strange arms at last seemed

to conquer. Not without considerable delay, not without mighty struggles, not without seas of blood mirroring some three millions of martyr crowns. But the victory was at length complete. Olympus surrendered at discretion. The world's conquerors themselves passed under the yoke. The faith of the great Nazarene came up from the Catacombs, and took possession of market-places and camps and schools and temples and senate-houses and throne. Cæsar himself knelt at the foot of the Cross.

Was this great victory gained by merely the visible weapons used? Doubtless, truth is mighty. Doubtless, the new religion was manifestly superior to the old. Doubtless, there is a commanding eloquence in earnest faith, blameless living, heroic constancy and "line upon line." Doubtless, also, the old faith had some of the infirmities of old age. Yet Gibbon was wrong. Such facts are insufficient to explain that Roman victory. Naturally, the blazing bush would have been consumed and the stripling David have fallen an easy prey to the giant. But David stands with his foot on the huge warrior and gives thanks to God. Does he mistake? Did not Jesus say even to the apostles, "Without me ye can do nothing"? Did not an apostle say, "I have planted; Apollos watered; but God gave the

increase"? Were not the apostles, even while miracle-working, in the habit of invoking divine power that the word of God might have free course and be glorified? How certain, then, is it that the uninspired and non-miracle-working successors of the apostles must have had a divine power to give them success! No believer in the Scriptures doubts it. The Roman victory over Romans was supernaturally won. In advance of the sword of Gideon waved invisibly a much more effulgent and efficient weapon—*the sword of the Lord*.

#### *The Continental Victory.*

After a while came another victory—a victory out of the very jaws of defeat. Christianity gradually became corrupted by alliance with the state and other causes. Antichrist appeared. Ritualisms, hierarchies, traditions and superstitions largely covered up the simple gospel and its simple institutions. Buried under heaps of rubbish and clogging material, what can that gospel alone do to spread itself over all Europe? When in all its native purity and freedom, also armed with miracles, it still needed in addition the convincing and converting power of the Holy Spirit in person in order to succeed: after miracles were withdrawn it needed that divine help still more, if possible; and after

both miracles and purity had gone, and gross corruptions of doctrines and practice had come—come into the camp of Israel and eaten the bowstrings and rusted the swords and spears of the host—it needed such personal divine help still more to make its way. Yet its way was made.

Hear the sound of a mighty rushing! Is it the coming of hurricanes? Is it the downpour of torrents and rocks from the Alps? Yes, torrents and avalanches of wild and ruthless men—men who worship Odin and Freia, Thor and Balder, who drink human blood out of human skulls, spend life in alternate feasting and bloodshed, desire nothing better for themselves, hope to spend an eternity in the same way. Down come Goths, Huns, Vandals—down come Alarics and Attilas, scourges of God, sweeping before them an enervate people as the swollen Po in spring sweeps along the dry leaves and straws of winter. Surely the falling empire will carry down with it its religion! Surely the floods of paganism will paganize everything—will bury the Christian faith and institutions wholly out of sight! Not so. The idols disappear. Disappear the savage orgies and human sacrifices. Odin and his Walhalla surrender at discretion, as Jupiter and his Olympus have already done. The conquerors are



conquered. The true God passes the Alps, enters the German cabins, crosses into Britain, summers and winters, cross in hand, among the hardy Northmen. So the fall of Rome was the conversion of Europe. The converts, it is true, were still rude and ignorant and superstitious, but as compared with their former selves they were new creatures. It was a change from midnight to morning, from midwinter to spring, from mortal sickness to convalescence. Such a result in the absence of miracles, and considering how the Samson of apostolic times had been shorn of much of his proper strength, required even a mightier interposition of the Hand than was needed when religion was purer, and especially when it was armed with signs and wonders.

#### *The Reformation and Reformers.*

But men gravitate wonderfully. The Evil One also bears them downward with a heavy hand. And so at last Christian Europe reaches so low a level that the day is almost as night. The Dark Ages? Yes, almost subterranean in regard to religion. The Bible banished and vanished, "contradicting and blaspheming" traditions of men raised to its vacant throne; everywhere doctrines and practices, principles and institutions, of which the apostles never

heard—image-worship, indulgences, priestly omnipotence, salvation by sacrament and ritual, “Mary, queen of heaven,” “our Lord God the Pope”! Shocking! Is this real Christianity, this the true Church of Jesus Christ? It is scarcely more than the old paganism revived and baptized. A Roman of the first century, revisiting the earth and his old haunts, would think the temples still occupied by the old divinities. He would find the same statues and altars, smell the same incense, hear the same unintelligible mumbling, see the same ridiculous pantomime and millinery, witness priest and people doing the same wickedness. Only the Pontifex Maximus is now Pope Leo X.

“But out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.” From the corrupt carcass of the lion appeared the Protestant Reformation. This Reformation, with many a sore set-back during more than three centuries, has gradually encroached much on all papal territory, has won its way to a commanding position in the chief European countries, has fairly appropriated to itself the North American continent, and is now vigorously pushing out conquering detachments into all quarters of the globe.

Now, it is not to numbers and might of men

that such victories, from Luther downward, can be attributed. The stars in their courses have fought against Sisera. That Protestant Reformation! Will *arms* account for it? They were on the other side. *The Christianity and Church of the time?* These were more corrupt, and therefore weaker for enlightening and converting men, than ever before, and were administered by men who were successors of the apostles only in name. Leprous men never cure themselves. Desperately diseased bodies must have help from abroad. Did help come from natural principles and agencies outside of Christianity and its institutions—for example, from larger knowledge, better government, greater freedom, the Renaissance of literature, learning and art? These, on Bible principles, have even less reforming and lifting power than a corrupt Christianity, for, by supposition, they have absolutely nothing of the Christian element in them. So, even more than in the case mentioned before, the Bible sends us to the Holy Ghost, to the personal agency of God, for explanation of Luther and Calvin and Zuingli and their successors. For it tells us that a perfectly pure Christianity in the hands of inspired and miracle-working apostles was insufficient to this class of results. Much more such a drossy Christianity as Europe had at the beginning of

the sixteenth century in the hands of a still more drossy priesthood and executive.

As to the general advance of Protestantism since, we are compelled to the same philosophy. Without such enlightening and persuading divine power as comes in answer to prayer the word of God would never have had free course and been glorified as it has. Neither in purity of doctrine nor in personal qualifications for their work were the early Reformers, or any of their successors down to the present, peers of those inspired apostles who were "empowered from on high," and the gold of whose teaching was without any dross. Yet even these peerless men, with an absolutely pure gospel, had to cry heavenward for success. To them Paul was nothing, Apollos nothing, but God who gave the increase much. What, then, are these modern apostles? I profess a tolerably high respect for Luther and his associates and their shining wake of reforming and evangelizing men adown the ages. But one can, without much difficulty, find a good many reasonable stones to cast at the best of them. They often lacked judgment as interpreters and proclaimers of the gospel. They made many a mistake. Many a rag of the old flattered on their new garments. They were often useful only by being overruled. They were

very far from being such planters and waterers as Paul and Apollos; and must not God have given them such increase as they had? The doctrine of all of them was, "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it."

The Roman apostasy was a great enemy to Christianity—even greater than the Mohammedanism and Paganism with which a collateral contest has been successfully waged. But since the Protestant Reformation, and notably in our own time, has appeared a greater enemy still. I mean *pseudo-science*—attacking religion in its very primary sources, and too often doing it from positions of dignity and influence to which it has been helped, and in which it has been maintained, by the official and pledged guardians of religion.

## I.

Out of a mountain  
That rose beyond sight,  
Struggled a fountain  
Into the sunlight.

Fed by the whiteness  
That gleams evermore  
On the far summit,  
The water ran o'er,

And, downward moving  
Like a molten ray,

Cheerily singing,  
At length found its way

To the wide lowlands ;  
And then sparkled on,  
Past farms and cities,  
A broad silver zone ;

Wider and wider,  
As the lands went by,  
Richer and richer  
With hues of the sky ;

Till, a broad river,  
With sunset aflame,  
Home to the ocean  
In triumph it came.

Ah, what green beauty,  
What plenty and glee,  
As smiled that water  
From mountain to sea !

All things drank of it,  
And broke into psalm,  
From the wall-hyssop  
To cedar and palm ;

From clouds of insects  
That dip treble wing,  
To crowds of mankind  
Who bass anthems sing.

Laughed the fat pastures,  
Shouted corn and vine ;  
Flocks and herds shouted—  
The water was wine.

II.

A spring so precious,  
So vital to all,  
Of course had round it  
A guard and a wall.

"Now mind, ye keepers!  
Keep this your charge well;  
Far from its margin  
All vile things repel.

"Let naught whatever,  
Whate'er be the plea,  
Mix with these waters  
That go to the sea.

"Night and day watching,  
No risk must befall  
The bright sweet waters  
So vital to all.

Will you be faithful?"—  
"We will, yes, we will."—  
"This double promise  
Be sure you fulfill."

III.

Sang the days onward,  
Months went and came,  
The guard grew careless—  
'Twas guard but in name.

Just then a stranger,  
In dress like a sage,  
His beard long flowing  
And snow-white with age,

Greeted the watchmen—  
 Would fain see the spring;  
 Thought he could help it  
 With drugs he could bring.

His name? 'Twas *Science*—  
 Great things had he done;  
 Would they see greater?  
 Then grant him his boon.

His words came smoothly,  
 His promise was grand;  
 They took his promise,  
 And gave him their hand.

A dark specific  
 They helped to compound;  
 To flask they helped him,  
 Then helped to the ground:

The gate swung open—  
 So gave him to stand  
 Hard by the fountain,  
 With flask in his hand.

Down went the contents  
 With a startling hiss:  
 Was it a demon?  
 The spring shuddered, "*Yes!*"

But that grim wedlock  
 It could not then flee;  
 So sped together,  
 From mountain to sea,

Angel and demon,  
 Blessing and bane;



But bane was master  
 All through to the main.

Faded each grass-blade,  
 Not a worm that drank  
 That water possessed  
 But its life-pulse sank,

Thin grew the cattle,  
 The birds ceased their song,  
 Sick fell the cities  
 That river along.

The fiend-breath, rising  
 In a hot, thick mist,  
 Lay on the waters  
 As they foamed and hissed—

Lay like a serpent  
 The landscape along ;  
 Then writhed and parted  
 As the winds grew strong ;

Parted and floated,  
 In many a cloud,  
 The broad land over—  
 Each cloud was a shroud

Where dead men rotted ;  
 And the air grew fell  
 With a new fiend-breath  
 From a new-made hell.

#### IV.

Now tell me truly,  
 Ye that hear my tale,  
 Which the more guilty  
 In reason's just scale—

That sage-like stranger  
Who cast in the bane  
That went forth wasting  
From fountain to main?

Or those strange keepers,  
Promising so fair,  
Hands on the Gospels,  
No taint should come there,

Yet both hands lending  
To help to the spring,  
Of tramps the Satan,  
Of poisons the King?

It is hardly necessary for us to answer this question. Good causes have always suffered more from the mistakes and misconduct of their pledged friends than from all other sources. Especially has the Christian cause found its greatest hindrances and harms, as well as its greatest helps, in those within its own pale. Had it not been for the unworthy living of many professed Christians, Christianity would long ere this have possessed the world. Christ was really crucified by Judas. The primitive Church became the papal through the ambitions and speculations and unfaithfulness of its official teachers. Through such teachers, along the succeeding centuries, came in the chief heresies that menaced, distracted and disabled the Church of the Reformation. In more recent

years pulpits and presses and institutions of learning, not a few, which had been established and endowed in the interest of religion, and which still were under ecclesiastical supervision, have been handed over bodily to the enemy. The same mischief is still going on, and in the same way. Some of the best fountains of culture and influence ever consecrated to Christ and humanity are having the virus of unbelief in its worst form infused into them at the hands of men in the uniform of science who have been introduced into their places, and are maintained in them, by the official guardians of the religion they are attacking. We shall not attempt to divide the guilt between principal and subalterns, between the pseudo-science that casts in the bane and those who bring the poisoner to the brink of the fountain. It is certain that the Lord does and will fight against *both* of these parties—will hold them to a severe account for the mischief they have done or allowed; will, finally, by his consummate antidotes freely cast in, restore to the great spring its normal purity and sweetness. We do not know how long this victory will linger; it is possible that religion may yet see dark days; but this we know, that in the end all the clouds will be swept away and the sun come forth triumphantly. And it will be not so much from

the powers of the men who are "valiant for the truth on the earth," not so much from the might of our apologetics and of the eloquence of Christian orators and scholars, as by the secret currents of divine force in these, combined with those providential workings which so often in the past have suddenly torn the mask from false science and overwhelmed it with confusion. No doubt the friends of truth will be exceedingly vigilant and active. The simple will be taught to "avoid profane babblings and oppositions of science, falsely so called." The guardians of the young will take large precautions in their behalf against the "scoffers to come in the last days," who will scoff in the name of the laws of nature, saying, "All things continue as they were from the beginning." Full surely the men of war will set themselves in array, the champions will "willingly offer themselves in the high places of the field," the Davids will sling their stones into the forehead of Unbelief—in short, Christians will "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." But these things will be mere *conditions* of the final victory. The conquering *forces* will be His who "giveth wisdom," who "taketh the wise in their own craftiness," who is the "Author and Finisher of faith," who says, "not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit." It will be by the might of prayer,

saying, "Oh send out thy light and thy truth." It will be by the faithfulness of Him who has promised that "the gates of hell shall not prevail." It will be by revivals of religion unstopping deaf ears, unsealing blind eyes, shining on both the written and unwritten word, making men both honest and earnest in their inquiries, giving them "the demonstration of the Spirit." In a word, it will be by the same Hand that has really gained all the former victories of religion.

*Armageddon.*

In course of time the successes of Christ in the world will rouse the elements of evil to a great combination against him. "This will never do. If matters go on in this way we are lost. *Up! up!* all ye haters and unfriends of God and the Bible, in whatever land dwelling, whatever your language, nationality, color or social position! Do you not see whither all this is tending? Are you ready to disappear from the world, to go into eternal banishment, to hand over all the world's treasures and pleasures and freedoms to the torch of a grim superstition? Let us stop wrangling among ourselves for a while, and make a common cause against a common foe." Lo, the scattered clouds, gradually taking courage from their fast-increasing number, at last draw together

into one dense blackness, and with Satan blowing hard behind them for an east wind, sweep up to Armageddon. All idolatries and papacies and false prophets; all unbeliefs, superstitions, false philosophies, heresies, mammons, vices, respectable ungodliness, castes, oppressions,—here they are in one compact array and with the port of Mars. It was to have been expected. It is ever the way of fighters, from the days of Demetrius and his fellow-craftsmen, backward and forward, when hard pressed and they have no quarter to expect, to stand at bay together, gather courage from desperation, and, if need be, die hard. And this is what the Bible says the enemies of the truth will do in the last days. The dragon and the beast and the false prophet will send out their emissaries in every direction and ally themselves with as many “powers” as possible (ambitions, greeds, lusts, arts, literatures and sciences so called, and other “rulers of the darkness of the world”), and, sinking for a time their mutual antagonisms in view of the common danger, will organize a common battle against the common foe. It will be a great battle. Behold Satan’s forlorn hope! Behold the “people and nations and kindred and tongues” of error and sin fighting for very life! NOW OR NEVER! is their battle-cry.

Well, NEVER let it be! All is lost. Despite desperation, despite numbers and unity and hell, all is lost. And by whom or what does the enemy suffer this Waterloo at Armageddon? (See Rev. 19.) Heaven is roused. Its armies march. They are led by One on whose vesture is written, "King of kings and Lord of lords." And when battle is joined, what an overthrow of the evil powers! Never such before. "Ho, all ye fowls that fly in the midst of heaven! come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men." Through this veil of vivid symbolism shines clearly the giant fact that it will be by the coming forth of the *supernatural* that the great victory will be gained. Whatever natural forces may be busy, whatever preaching and giving and writing and example in defence of the truth Christian workers may contribute, will be so marshaled and energized and supplemented by the Hand that to it will mainly belong the honors of the day. It will be the "day of God Almighty."

### *The Millennium.*

The issue? As stars come out, one after another, on the evening sky till the whole vault is ablaze—as, in some great inundation, stream

mingles with stream and pool adds itself to pool till the whole district, lowland and upland, is one broad shining sea—so the reformations just noticed will go on multiplying and meeting each other (not without many serious breaks in the advance, it may be) until the whole world is “full of the knowledge and glory of the Lord.” See, Babylon, the mother of abominations, has fallen! Fallen is the False Prophet. Boodh and Brahma and every other modern idol and fetish lie, like the Olympian deities and Dagon, prostrate and broken on their own threshold. Unbelief—where is it? Where are the men who have no religion at all? The “scientific” men, the men of “advanced thought,” the men so knowing that they know nothing of God or Christ or inspired Bible or soul or hereafter? The materialists, the pantheists, the skeptics, the agnostics, the “philosophers,” the fungi of our culture and cancers of our civilization,—what has become of them? Vanished quite. Faith is practically universal; and *such* faith! The very souls of the martyrs have come back, and are sitting on thrones all over the world. The Great Martyr himself is in the midst of them, before whose throne all other thrones are dim and low, and whose sun makes their stars. “And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” Their mighty faith, their



unconquerable principle, their sublime lives, are royally governing in every land. "Born in the purple," worthy to reign, undisputed and indisputable sovereigns, not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like the least of these. How much less like this Greatest, on whose head are many crowns! Long live the King! And the little children all over the world are crying Hosannas to Him who has come in the name of the Lord; and mightily swells around that tender music the chording bass of nations and peoples and tongues, and bears it heavenward as the ocean sweeps aloft the foam.

And now the wolf and lamb lie down together. Wars have ceased. Prisons are empty. Civil governments have become a shadow for weight; and in its coolness the weary nations repose. Knowledge is the roof-tree of every house, and its yellow fruit, low hanging, can be plucked from every window. Science and Art imitate from afar the miracles of God. Men have forgotten to be sick. Want has forgotten the way to men's houses. Above all, men are no longer praying, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." Why should they continue to ask for that they have already fully received? Holiness is written on the very bells of the horses. The earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord.

Blessed consummation! Will it be by natural tendency of human society, by blind, resistless law pushing slowly up through the ages, till at last the race will find itself on those lofty table-lands where the air is so pure, the light so strong and the outlook so grand? Scripture, history and experience tell us that the tendency of human nature is downward rather than upward (pray, what parent does not know it?)—even that very strong forces from without must be brought into play to overcome this gravity, and that even such are generally insufficient. Will it be by Christians, Mohammed-like, going forth to the nations with the Bible in one hand and the sword in the other? Not so have the past successes of Christianity been gained; and nothing is farther from its thought to-day than the idea of spreading itself through the world by outward force. We have been taught by our religion itself that the only sword we are to wield in its behalf is the sword of the Spirit; that men are sanctified by the truth; that it pleases God by the foolishness of preaching to save them who believe. Will it be by policy and diplomacy and statecraft and patronage of the great and chance freshets of favoring circumstances? Very likely that the times and various circumstances will, to some extent, be propitious—that good men will labor zealously,

take pains to act discreetly, like Paul study a sacred policy in dealing with the prejudices and passions of men, accommodate themselves carefully to the common relations of cause and effect in their efforts to advance religion. But this I know, as every student of the Bible knows, that such things are merely *conditions* under which God himself potentially works; that free institutions, general education, the growth of linguistic and commercial facilities for spreading the truth, Christian eloquence and learning and alms and prestiges, missionary organizations, nursing kings and queens,—all such things, are merely ushers and handmaids to the supernatural, are merely the raceways through which pours the current of that divine Force that works all things after the counsel of its own will. Very likely these raceways will be covered ones, as they are now, and no outward looking will be able to discover the forceful supernatural that pours within; but, for all that, this is what will really set in motion all the wheels of the last victorious evangelism.

The Christian philosophy of this is plainly the same as that of those preliminary successes already noticed. If inspired apostles, with hand and thought full of the might of miracles, with a gospel fresh from its source and

clear as crystal pouring like a river from tongue and lips, needed a further divine interposition, how much more will it be needed by the less royally furnished workmen of later times as they strain toward the latter-day glory! But there is more direct testimony. Read Isa. 65, also Rev. 18 and 19. You see Babylon falling from her seven hills by the hand of "the Lord God who judgeth her." You see an angel sent down from heaven "to chain Satan and cast him into the pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him that he should deceive the nations no more for a thousand years." And thus you see that the "Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations."

Men gaze on the structure  
 With awe-smitten eyes:  
 Is the Titan earth-born,  
 Or child of the skies?

How camest thou hither,  
 Galaxy of rock!  
 Didst come from a fire-mist,  
 Whose thoughtless laws mock

Thought, or, on a sudden,  
 Did some thunder-shock,  
 Serving as rough midwife,  
 Nature's womb unlock,

And give us Athene,  
A goddess full grown,  
In armor celestial,  
And done into stone?

List ye to my answer:  
Architect makes plan,  
Then sends for his workmen,  
His work gives each man.

They lay the foundations,  
Cruciform and vast,  
Deep down on a rock-bed  
That for ever shall last;

Then hew the fair marbles,  
Set block upon block,  
From head of the corner,  
Till at last they knock

At the door of heaven  
For walls that have come,  
Upright as its justice,  
To pray for a dome;

And to get such copy,  
As prayers best can,  
Of that spangled buckler  
That nightly shields man.

Arch mimic shield grandly,  
Ye workmen on high;  
With jewels on sapphire,  
So fashion your sky.

Then let it down gently—  
So gently let down

As on a new monarch  
They set his fair crown.

Along with this outward  
And its musical din,  
Twin glory and music  
Have ripened within.

Columns bear up heaven;  
Pictured windows stain  
Sculptured woods and marbles  
With their pageant rain—

Sculptured woods and marbles,  
Litanies and songs,  
Whose thunders of silence  
Silence human tongues!

At last all is finished,  
Through smiles and through tears  
Of earth's fickle weather,  
As days spell out years—

Gloriously finished!  
A miracle in stone!  
Stand off and gaze on it,  
Ye pilgrims, each one,

And say that such marvel,  
Such stone jubilee,  
Is worth a whole lifetime  
Of journey to see.

Ay, say that such temple,  
So grand and so fair,  
The broad earth saw never  
Triumphing through air.

Hail, stone constellation!  
Hail, solid sunlight!  
Hail, Salem the Golden!  
With awe and delight

I gaze on thy greatness,  
Whose glory defies  
That men should not call thee  
A child of the skies.

Heart! leap like a charger  
That glory to see;  
What heart does no leaping  
Is no heart for me.

Ho! set the chimes ringing  
Close to heaven's ear,  
And sing out *Te Deums*  
Till all the world hear.

For not by mere nature,  
Say men what they may,  
Does Salem the Golden  
Flood earth with its day.

Can dead quarries flower  
Into such a fane,  
If God to our prayers  
Add not his AMEN?

Nay, God is the Builder;  
His hand and his thought,  
Though much served by nature,  
Count nature but naught

As aid in the framing,  
Or aid in the plan,

Of this grandest temple  
That ever held man.

Tell not of the "science"  
That tells not of God:  
'Tis only pretender,  
That sees but the sod,

Nor cries with eyes lifted,  
And voice full of awe,  
"Tis God the Almighty,  
And not mighty law,

"That built the great heaven;  
Then build to accord  
Thy temple of temples,  
O CHURCH OF THE LORD!"

### THE LAST DAY.

Each man has his last day. To each a sun rises of which he never sees the setting, or a sun sets of which he never sees the rising. Rosy dawns will ascend, hours crowned with light go treading gayly over the earth; but not for *him*. Fast locked up in his narrow coffer, laid away deeply in the bowels of the earth, he lies in stiff unconsciousness of the long procession above him of days and seasons and ages.

Families have their last day. Households part never to meet again. Ancient lines, dating back beyond the Conquest, at last come to an end. The ancestral mansion is vacant, the title is extinct, the estates revert



to the state. In almost every community "there is one alone, he hath neither child nor brother," and his last day will be the last of his name and race.

States also have their last day. Where are the thrones of Carthage and Tyre, of Assyria and Egypt, of Macedon and Rome? All gone, like extinct individuals and families. After defying the trickle and the flood, the rust and the battle of centuries, they at last gave way. One sun arose on them still breathing, the next found them only matters of history. In the interval they had passed from something to nothing. And other states occupied their places; not a few of whom, in their turn, have expired and been laid away in the cemeteries of history.

Also, the world will have its last day. We have the best authority for saying that the time will come when the human race will disappear in a body from the earth, and the planet itself and all things therein be burned up. Also the best of authority for speaking of that time as a day, and as the last day. The Book has spoken—not merely the analogies. "After its words they speak not again, and its speech drops upon them."

Exactly when this greatest of last days will come we are not informed. The month,

the year, the century, the millennium even, in which it will occur is not foretold. So little hint is given of its exact locality in history that its actual advent will take the world at large thoroughly by surprise. Like the springing of a snare or the coming of a thief will it be. Up rolls that last sun from the east as brightly and steadily as usual. Men hie them to their business, their pleasures, without a thought of change. The farmer is toiling in his field, the merchant selling in his store, the sailor bending his sails for distant climes. The child is busy with its toys; the youth at the education which he hopes will some years hence conduct him to honor and usefulness; and manhood at far-reaching plans which the longest life will hardly suffice to realize. In a word, all the world, like the sun, is moving along the beaten highway of the ages without a thought of its coming to an abrupt end a few steps farther on. As it was in the days before the Flood, when men "were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and knew not until the Flood came and took them all away, so shall the coming of the Son of man be."

Yet that last day will not be without its harbingers. It will be immediately preceded by

very troublous times, especially by a time of sad religious relapse. The long-bound Satan will reappear among men. The Golden Age will turn to an age of iron. Wickedness will become a vast majority. And why not? If holy Adam could become a sinner in his Paradise; if Lucifer, son of the morning, could drop out of heaven into hell, and into that deeper pit which we call Satan; if the primitive Church could backslide partly into Romanism and partly into annihilation,—why may not a world drop out of a glorious millennium? Yes, that is what will happen. The summer will become winter, the shadow will go back some thousands of years on the dial of Jesus; the clock of the ages will point again at that early time when Christians were relatively a mere handful, and a sorely persecuted handful at that. “Satan is loosed, and is gone out to deceive the nations and gather them together to battle” against the truth. Hark to the tramp of the militant peoples! From the four winds come all the Antichrists of the period—come in various uniforms, with various weapons and banners, and with various shibboleths of profane speech, but with one array and purpose—viz. to finally put down religion in the world. So they compass the camp of the saints about: “Now we have them! Let

none escape. Give no quarter—do you hear, men of Gog and Magog?—*give no quarter!*”

It is man's extremity. Also God's opportunity. Ye can do nothing, O saints; therefore stand still and see the salvation of God!

The forked fire leaps from the sky. Aflame are the tents of assailing Gog and Magog. Their banners are meteors, their trumpets are dumb, their bodies cover the ground as charcoal statues. Has brute nature blindly let slip a broad electric flash? Nay, from GOD out of heaven came the blazing judgment, and all the Sennacheribs of unbelief and hostility have gone suddenly into his presence to answer for both their deeds and their opinions.

Whether this biblical picture means literal war, or only such attacks on religion as the tongues and pens and laws and examples and social tactics of very bitter foes can make, is not important to be decided. It certainly means at least a banding together of all the evil elements of the world in a supreme effort to suppress Christianity, and a supreme defeat of that effort by direct divine interference. It was the Hand that smote those sinners and sent them into the presence of the Judge.

Into the presence of the Judge! Well, they have not far to go. That fiery arrow was shot

from God on his way to judge the world. "Behold! behold! the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment upon all and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." And now he is near. The sky begins to glow with awful lights. A broader flash, and, lo, the van of the heavenly host appears in a colossal form in whose presence the sun itself is dim. Standing one foot on sea and one on solid land, the mighty angel lifts his hand and "swears by Him that liveth for ever and ever that time shall be no longer." The great voice rings all round the world. All business suddenly stops—all pleasure as well. The tool drops from the hand of the laborer, the pen from the hand of the writer, the sceptre from the hand of the king. The ships cease to sail, the cars to rush and the factories to hum. The noisy, restless world, that—for who knows how many thousand years?—has not ceased its rush and din for a single moment, is at last as still and dumb as the grave itself—a world of statues gazing up with such faces of awe and astonishment as were never yet seen in statues—gazing up to see the angel putting a trump to his lips, to hear a blast such as never yet sound-

ed from the swollen cheeks of war or from the artillery of lightnings and storms. It sweeps from zone to zone. It rocks all the oceans. All the continents are atremble. Like some golden dagger the potent melody pierces all the sealed sepulchres, all the deep sea-caves, all the mausolea and catacombs and Westminster Abbeys and Père la Chaises of the world; and wherever is the dust of a human being, wherever it has been carried by wind or wave or war, or is in process of circulation in vegetable or animal, there the searching summons hunts it out and brings it to its fellows. Oh, what a resurrection! Oh, what hosts on hosts, rising from the face of the world like a dense mist! Here are all the human generations away back to Adam. Not a single missing link, not an atom of humanity missing. Nobody too insignificant to be here, and nobody too great. Here are the men of whom the world was not worthy, and the men not worthy of the world. Here are the men for whom nobody cared, and those who cared for nobody. Caucasian lords and African slaves; deformed Æsops and symmetrical Apollos; Dives from out his costly casket, and Lazarus from out his deal box; kings fresh from the sculptured crypts of cathedrals and pyramids, and subjects fresh from the clay of the breezy country-side; famous men whose

names bestar history, and plebeian millions who left "no footprints on the sands of time;" men weighted with untold tons of monumental granite, and men scarce covered with the pitying sod; the men who were buried, and the men who were burned and went off in gases toward the four winds; the lifelike corpse that was laid in dust but yesterday, and the handful of dust over which some eighty centuries have crept away since it breathed and walked; babes that saw but a single sun, and patriarchs frosty with wellnigh a millennium; the wise virgins and the foolish, the great saints and the great sinners; prophets and apostles and martyrs, together with heresiarchs and antichrists and sodomites rotten in both body and soul while yet above ground; the slain Gogs and Magogs of a few moments ago, and their ancient sires who were drowned by the Flood, burned in Siddim and crushed by the watery walls of the Red Sea; the men of faith who have been counting on such a time as this, and those who stoutly maintained that a resurrection is incredible and impossible, and even unthinkable,—here they all are, ancients and moderns, Jews and Gentiles, away to the land of Sinim. And here are we of the sunset land—you and I, who long ago were gathered to our fathers. Here in mid-air, for the broad earth-surface can no longer hold

the mighty multitude of its returning sons and daughters.

Behold the dead! just now, such, never to be such again. But what of those who have never died, but who this morning, some fifteen hundred millions strong, were in the full blast of their earthly ways, and now in immeasurable astonishment find themselves almost lost in the deluge of old life that is pouring in upon them from every quarter?—what of them? The same earth-quaking blast that roused the dead transformed the living. Suddenly the material refined into the spiritual. All grossness and infirmity vanished. Age flashed back and youth flashed forward into mid-life, and from the eyes of mid-life flashed the strange fires of an immortal life. The maimed cast away their crutches—what need they? The sick desert their beds and hospitals—what further use for nurses and doctors? The prisoners walk forth from their prisons without challenge—trouble not yourselves any further about them, O ye jailers, judges, jury; henceforth GOD will take both them and you in charge. And up, all of you! defy gravity and join in mid-air the mutely-expectant hosts of other generations.

Any among you now to doubt the Last Day? Any Paines, at first or second hand, to laugh at the old wives' fables and priestcrafts with which



only women and children are frightened? Any "philosophers" refusing to see in nature anything but eyeless law, and ready with their demonstrations that neither in earth nor starry heavens is there aught requiring the supernatural? Pray, is this *day*, with its effulgent angel and earthquake-trump and countless resurrections and transformations, naturally evolved from the primal fire-mist?

Mutely-expectant, upward-gazing billions, what is that far back in the sky? A star? A planet? A moon? A sun? Still swells the splendor; gradually divides into angels and archangels and thrones and principalities and powers in forms so lovely, so stately, so resplendent, as never before shone on the sight of living men. And yet these make but little impression on that mutely-expectant, upward-gazing human host; for in the midst of that glorious array is seen a Form so much more glorious that no eye can for one moment wander from him—human yet divine, and through all the divine splendor sending forth a *something* that says, *It is He of Nazareth*. And Pontius Pilate knows him. Know him Annas and Caiaphas and all who cried so vehemently, "Crucify him! crucify him!" and the soldiers who plaited the crown of thorns and plied the scourge and drove the nails; and the centurion

who exclaimed, "Truly, this is the Son of God." And now his thought says it again in silent thunders. Who is there among all those rapt, upward-gazing hosts to differ from him? At last there is absolute uniformity of belief among men.

Is it really a great white throne? Is it really a Book of Remembrance? Ah, what floods of retrospection now sweep through every soul! Not a thing that any man has said or done but is present with him now. He is himself a book of remembrance, also of predictions. Seeing so clearly what he has been and what he is, he knows as with a sunbeam what he *will* be. He can go to his own place on the right hand of the Judge or on the left without any help from the angels. But who is willing to go to the dreadful left? Once it was a matter of willingness and unwillingness; it is so no longer. Probation is ended. And the angels divide the goats from the sheep.

Behold the two great parties into which men have always been divided in God's sight, though inextricably mixed to human eyes, now standing so far apart that all eyes can see the division! And the division will need no revision. No mistake here—not one sheep among the goats, not one goat among the sheep. Perplexed as some of us were formerly to know what to think of our neighbors, what to think

of ourselves even, such perplexity exists no longer.

“Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” Does any goat fail to hear? No. Does any wish to obey? No. Is any able to disobey? No. All that is past, and away sweep the multitudes of reprobrates as if driven by ten thousand whirlwinds—away, and still away, till on the outskirts of vision the night receives them.

“Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” And the cloudy throne begins to ascend. With it ascends the satellite glory of the angels. Drawn as by some mighty attraction more commanding than that which binds sphere to sphere, and which they are neither able nor willing to resist, the redeemed hosts follow on—“a multitude which no man can number, out of every people and nation and kindred and tongue”—up through the atmosphere, up through the planetary spaces, up through the files of rejoicing stars, up through the gates of pearl.

On the golden threshold, O rearmost saint, linger for a moment and look behind thee. Let thy now celestial glance shoot along the still luminous track by which thou camest until it arrives at the poor deserted earth. Emptied

of all its people, rifled even as to all its graves, not a waif of humanity left above ground or beneath it—houses all vacant, roads untraveled, ships drifting idly on the moaning seas, libraries unconsulted, churches without congregations, schools without scholars, palaces without nobles and kings—see how desolate and empty the earth is. Well, the emptier the better, for the earth is old and forlorn and stained and saturated throughout with the vices of a thousand wicked generations. It seems waiting, like some refuse and decrepit and disfiguring pest-house, for the torch to be applied.

Will it be applied? Suddenly a fiery lance stands quivering in the bosom of the planet. In a moment the lance becomes a volcano, the volcano a fiery sea. Now all the mountains are volcanoes, all the plains fiery seas, and even the great deeps themselves are flaming as if their brine were oil. The rocks are mere tinder. The Arctic ices and snows are all aflame. The whole geography is ablaze, and from surface to centre is dissolved into lava, and then into a fire-mist that surges outward till it gathers into its terrible embrace the hapless moon. On the night-sky of some distant orb flames out a new star. Neighbor-planets are affrighted by the appearance of a new sun. What a furnace of stormy splendors! What a

carnival of raving, desperado gases! What a babel of awful sounds! It is the Armageddon of the elements, the jubilee of anarchy, nature's Reign of Terror, the civil war of demons.

Is that far-gazing saint surprised at what he sees? Not at all. He has long been looking forward to such a consummation. Not because he has been taught by the chemist that the earth is made up of combustibles and supporters of combustion. Not because some have assured him that the earth will gradually contract its orbit and at last wheel into the sun. Not because some physicists have told as science that, sooner or later, it cannot but be that the earth, amid the distractions of innumerable attractions, will collide with some other orb, and so conflagration result from the concussion of the two mighty flints. Not because he knew that every now and then some orb had suddenly blazed into view, and then swooned away through all the colors that belong to a decaying conflagration, and even that innumerable stars are only worlds on fire. Ah, no! But it is because he has read it in the Book. With its telescope he saw it ages ago. Borne by the prophets to their Pisgahs of outlook, he had seen the "heavens passing away, and the elements melting with fervent heat, and the earth and all things therein burning up"—seen it not as

the suicide of Nature, who, like Dido, had built her own funeral-pyre, but as the execution of a sentence by the supernatural on a polluted world, the fitting end of a theatre in which sin and shame have been ever enacting tragedies. *Let* it burn. The HAND is in it. The will of a just God was the kindling torch. And he turns and crosses the golden threshold to join his companions in their song of "Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

*The New Earth.*

Is the history of the earth at last finished? Have we seen its last chapter—nay, its last verse, its last letter, its last period? Have the mad flames scourged it back into nothingness? Who says that? Not science, not the Bible. If that saint who just now saw the earth burnt up will, after a time, look forth again from the earthward gate of heaven, especially if he will launch forth from it a space, he will see—what? Certainly a world wheeling on the old orbit. Certainly sun, moon and stars shining in its sky as of old. Certainly people and occupations and the rush and lightning of great enterprises. But, after all, he will see what is, in the main, a new world. Behold "the new heavens and the new earth in which dwelleth righteousness!" A sky which, perhaps through some

change in the constitution of the air or of the eyes that look up to it, has been transfigured into new wonderfulness and splendor. An earth beneath that rejoices and sings and claps its hands. It is no longer the wild and disorderly frontier of the kingdom, no longer a nest of treasons and insurrections, no longer the home of partially reconstructed rebels, as it was even in the millennium. At last it is peopled permanently by perfectly holy beings. Those miserable ups and downs of religion so long seen in individuals and society; the alternate triumph and defeat; the doleful mixture of good and bad, of loyalty and disloyalty, of gold and silver and iron and clay, in even the best,—are altogether and for ever things of the past. Somehow, as in some city a great conflagration with its numberless fiery tongues licks cleanly up the vile tenements and dens where squalor and vice have rioted and rotted, and makes way for boulevards and palaces; so, somehow, all that is refuse and disfiguring in character has disappeared from the earth in that tremendous crucible, and Medea's old father, full of wrinkles and aches, has come out of the dissolving flames a young Apollo. At last holiness reigns—holiness complete, universal, permanent. This trinity carries an outward as well as inward paradise in its bosom. Glorious souls are

housed in glorious bodies. The grim diseases, the truculent deaths, that all along the groaning past have so haunted palace and cabin, are gone for ever. Gone for ever are the old want, war, oppression, heresy, misgovernment, unbelief: one may hunt the wide world through for a single specimen, and hunt in vain. The species are extinct. They will never appear on the earth again, by evolution or otherwise.

In harmony with this state of things is the material environment. Physical nature has always taken its cue from the moral—does not forget to do it now. Ah, what landscapes! Ah, what fruits and flowers! Ah, what miracles of material beauty and grandeur beyond the wildest dreams of our poets and painters! The deserts are all gone—gone all the thorns and briars and swamps and miasms and other ugly and deadly things that so deformed the face of the old world and conformed it to the character of its people; and in their stead, lo, a setting worthy of the gem, a home fit for the peers of angels! And a jubilee happiness and science spring up as naturally in such circumstances as do the jubilee palms and flowers in that glorious soil. Hail, Age of Gold without any dross! Hail, Day that has neither night nor clouds! Hail, New Jerusalem freshly alighted from the skies in every land!



Whence this new state of things? Who made these royal people? Who built their palatial home and furnished it so superbly? It was not a windfall. Almighty chance had nothing to do with it. The laws of nature had, doubtless, *something* to do with it, but they no more evoked this tabernacle of God and New Jerusalem out of the fire-mists of the Last Day than they did the old heavens and earth out of a chaos of fiery elements. "And I saw the New Jerusalem coming down FROM GOD:" this is the last philosophy and ultimate science and true history-root of the glorious "new earth in which dwelleth righteousness."

Such are some of the loftier summits of supernaturalism in the earth. They are only the visible outjuttings, from a misty ocean, of a mighty continent that stretches away in unbroken sequence through all the abysses and over all the parallels and meridians of earthly fact and history. There are no real lacunæ whatever. From the moment when, at his word, the substance of the earth flashed out of nothing, up to that of its reconstruction into the new heavens and the new earth, God has followed each ultimate atom as an equatorial follows a star—not only with his watchful eye, but with his forceful right hand. His throne is set up in every mote that kindles in the sun-

beam. The currents of his will course through all the veins and arteries of being. Heat, light, gravity and every other physical force wear his harness and feel his spur. All the highways and byways of history, which are so trampled by armies of second causes, have, side by side with each tiny footprint of the creature, the gigantic footprint of the Creator. He domesticates in all the homes of the world, transacts in all its business, enacts in all its laws, advises in all its cabinets, marches with all its armies, as well as sanctifies in all its solemn temples. Even the free will and heart of man, however erratic and far-going their orbits, never pass beyond that all-encompassing firmament of which his fingers are the galaxies. Creating or suppressing, constructing or dissolving, placing or displacing, expanding or contracting, hastening or retarding, reining or spurring, helping or hindering—helping all right and hindering from all wrong—the Hand is working all things after the counsel of its own will, through all the zeniths and nadirs, through all the latitudes and longitudes, through all the pasts and futures, as well as present, of the earth—always as a benevolent providence, never as a heartless fate—the one almighty, omnipresent OPTIMISM of a world which but for him would have been a pessimism.









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